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New mining ventures in Venezuela and links to foreign capital

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Development Studies
Master's thesis
May 2020



Tiedekunta – Fakultet – Faculty Faculty of Social Sciences		Koulutusohjelma – Utbildningsprogram – Degree Programme Master 's Programme in Society and Change	
Tekijä – Författare – Author Joel Markus Lindberg			
Työn nimi – Arbetets titel – Title New mining ventures in Venezuela and links to foreign capital			
Oppiaine/Opintosuunta – Läroämne/Studieinriktning – Subject/Study track Development Studies			
Työn laji – Arbetets art – Level Master's Thesis		Aika – Datum – Month and year May 2020	Sivumäärä – Sidoantal – Number of pages 68 + 13 appendix pages
<p>Tiivistelmä – Referat – Abstract</p> <p>This thesis studies the discourse of governmental actors in resource-rich countries that base much of their economic structures on the extraction of natural resources. The goal of the study is to explore the links between foreign capital and government-led resource extraction ventures and understand what kind of a discourse is built around natural resource ventures and how governments represent these ventures as a viable model for 'development'. The focus of this study is the case of the new Orinoco Mining Arch – project in Venezuela, established in 2016, that represents a new extractivist turn in the traditionally oil-based economy of the country. In this thesis the link between foreign capital and resource extraction is understood as fundamentally interconnected through the theoretical framework that positions extractivism as part of a developmentalist and neoliberal ontology.</p> <p>The methodological approach of this thesis is that of Critical Discourse Analysis which is presented based on the poststructuralist views of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe on discourse. Furthermore, Fairclough's approach to Critical Discourse Analysis is used as a way to study and analysis of the research material through textual analysis, discursive practice and social practice. The data consists of three types of material that the Venezuelan governmental actors have published regarding the mining activities of the Orinoco Mining Arch: the opening speech by president Nicolás Maduro at the event to officiate the AMO project, the communications and news articles related to this new project published by the country's Ministry of Mining and country's the National Development Plans' sections that relate to mining.</p> <p>This study shows that attempts to legitimize governmental mining ventures are carried through by building a public image of an ecologically sustainable, dynamic and sovereign mining industry that is deeply linked to the Chavist-nationalist imaginary, and intertwined with more subtle elements, including foreign capital, in the discourse. The analysis of the data found that this resource nationalist discourse, its origin and its features are currently reproducing a developmentalist based neo-extractivist narrative which praises 'development', considers resource extraction as necessary, and follows a neoliberal logic of accumulation of capital. Thus, despite of its apparent potential for conflict, foreign capital it is part of the developmentalist narrative that the governmental discourse creates. Its manifestation as neo-extractivism has an immense potential for destruction in the socio-ecological context.</p>			
Avainsanat – Nyckelord – Keywords Extractivism, developmentalism, mining, Venezuela, natural resource politics, resource nationalism			

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1. Introduction

Throughout history, natural resource extraction has drawn profit-driven actors to regions rich in natural resources. The vital position of natural resources in the global commodity market, and the relatively quick source of income their exploitation provides, has even sparked interest towards national development models that take advantage of this rent seeking activity. The extraction of natural resources has contributed greatly to what Harvey (2010, 310) refers to as *accumulation by dispossession*, taking over vast territories for the exploitation of resources and displacing and creating a disruption in the socio-ecological systems of those territories. This developmental model, namely extractivism, has further been adopted to meet the needs of the current capitalistic rent-seeking world order where commodities, production and finance cannot be confined to one space, but need to be understood as part of the international and transnational spheres (Gudynas 2010). This 'neo-extractivism', in comparison with the 'old extractivism', contains a more intensive and increased need for foreign capital to function, as well as for the larger involvement of the state. Furthermore, fueled by the uncertainty of booms and busts of the resource commodity exporting sector, some nation states choose to focus mainly on the neo-extractivist model, making their economies rely heavily on crude, natural resource exploitation. Meanwhile, foreign actors are drawn to invest their capital in the riches that such countries have. In Latin America, for example, this extractivist history has long roots and the increase of left-wing governments of the 2000s and many countries around the region have seen extractivism maintain its importance as a model for 'development' (Gudynas 2013). This 'turn' has also meant that the discourse about the role and style of resource extraction has changed to show how this exploitation can serve the state and its people, rather than neoliberalist interests globally (ibid. 2013). This discursive change, and ways that it can be employed to conciliate conflicts between the extractivist industry and the state, deserves to be studied to see what makes extractivism attractive as an economic model and how discourse about resource exploitation and 'development' is constructed.

In this thesis I investigate the relationship of neo-extractivism and new extractivist projects that seek to keep the extractivist model as a viable way to 'development'. My aim is to investigate whether these projects can ever be completely separated from the involvement of foreign capital in the form of investments and aid. What taking on new extractivist projects means in terms of

linkages between the national and international actors and how governmental actors create a discourse to make sense of this developmental model functions as the overarching problematic of this thesis. A case for this investigation is taken from Venezuela where these phenomena meet in a relevant way in the new mining ventures that the country has been promoting since 2016 through an attempt of an overhauling reform of the oil-based economy of the country.

The purpose of this study is to explore the involvement of foreign capital in Venezuela's new mining industry in the Orinoco Mining Arch (AMO¹), the flagship megaproject of the new mining ventures. Specifically, I direct my attention towards how this increased international involvement fits in the governmentally promoted 'development' plans that rely heavily on natural resource exploitation, and how these plans are articulated by governmental actors related to mining activities. To further understand the aforementioned problematic, I study the link between the private (international) and the public (national) and how this relationship is being depicted, justified and presented as part of a plan to improve the overall economic and social performance in Venezuela.

What follows is an outline of this thesis to give the reader a structural idea of the contents as well as clarifying and explaining the important sections of the study. This paper contains six chapters which help to structure the thesis and support the arguments that are made in this study about the links of extractivist 'developmental' plans and foreign capital, impact of change in the structure of economic systems based on the notion of natural resource extraction and how all of this is being framed and 'sold' as a viable system of providing desired 'developmental' goals. This section concludes **Chapter 1** of the thesis which is used to discuss about the purpose of the thesis, giving it the background required and introducing the concepts and methodologies that are further examined in the chapters to follow. **Chapter 2** presents the theoretical framework and the needed investigative tools connected to the mining and petroleum industries and its international investments in Venezuela, which serves as the case for this study. The following chapters delve deeper into the research using the background provided here.

Chapter 3 further explores the concepts and theoretical context that this study operates in. The chapter introduces the concept of extractivism as well as how we can speak of neo-extractivism

¹ I will often refer to the Mining Arch with this abbreviation that comes from the original Spanish name of the Arch: *Arco Minero del Orinoco*.

when referring to mining policies of some countries that do not operate under the exact rules of the extractivism of old but still form part of the extractivist model. I further emphasize the connection of the core concepts of extractivism and foreign capital as well as bind these together under a developmentalist ontology. I also make a case for why all of these features play a significant role in the building of particular developmental discourse(s) and which theoretical concepts are needed to understand it, all of which can be better understood through the case study that follows.

Chapter 4 re-introduces the methodology of this thesis. It does so by going back to a discussion about critical discourse analysis (CDA). Therefore, the chapter discusses the ontological background of the research and its methods, by leaning on a tradition of post-structuralist thought and the idea of discourse as constituting much, if not all, of human action and societies. Furthermore, the chapter further presents the tools used and the rationale behind using the chosen method of discourse analysis and its complementary tools in the analysis of the new extractivist turn and the role of foreign capital involved in it. Lastly, in this chapter I introduce the data I use for the CDA, based on the publications and communications of the Venezuelan governmental authorities related to the mining sector.

Chapter 5 introduces the case and the related relevant information. This is done by building a historical overview on the natural resource exploitation in Venezuela – from building the rent seeking extractivism through oil to the current crisis and proposed solution of mining. The chapter focuses on some key aspects from which the extractivist model takes its strength: the long historical building of the concept of the ‘Petro-State’, the nationalization processes throughout the nation’s political history, and the involvement of international actors as well as some consideration how these have contributed to the creation of current social imaginaries based on oil exploitation. The chapter is a broad overview and it serves to provide the necessary background for the Venezuelan model that is needed in order to contextualize the nation’s governmental discourse on natural resource extraction.

Chapter 6 explains Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) on the chosen data of the activation of the Orinoco Mining Arch. In this chapter the data is dissected into manageable parts. Firstly, it consists of showing important results of the CDA and secondly, it builds on those findings through the introduced theoretical concepts of chapter two, relating together those concepts and the particular case with the research questions of this thesis. The final chapter offers concluding remarks and positions itself in the tradition of CDA by building these conclusions through the outcomes of

the case in Venezuela. I close with an established an argument for the importance of understanding extractivism as a part of a particular ontology reproduced by hegemonic discourse.

2. Research questions, approach and methods

In this thesis, I investigate the Venezuelan government's intents to promote the mining industry as an alternative for the country's highly oil-based export economy. I study this shift through the following question:

What kind of a governmental discourse is established around new natural resource exploitation (mega)projects, and how does this discourse address the role of foreign capital?

My focus, and interest, in this thesis is the national context of resource-rich countries, associated with the concept of 'neo-extractivism'². The above is based on the following hypothesis. The opening up of territory for large-scale mining is reproducing the neo-extractivist turn of Venezuela that enables the international influence and control of profits and resources according to the global capitalist system. This phenomenon, however, masked in the discourse of the government that intends on re-establishing natural resource exploitation as a part of 'development' of other economic sectors and the well-being of the population in an intensely national context de-emphasizes the role of foreign capital. This hypothesis creates a strong need for studying the discursive elements of governmental actions.

I unravel this question through the example of Venezuela's new Orinoco Mining Arch project. To further investigate this question, it is necessary to briefly address the existing research and literature that complement and support this thesis. Firstly, recognizing literature on the problems of resource dependent economies, such as the 'resource curse' and 'Dutch disease'³, is important and these debates are addressed in the Venezuelan context as well (for example, Rosales 2016). However, as this paper's focus is on the discursive side of extractivism, the debates on resource dependency and

² This concept is explained in the following chapter.

³ For a discussion about the effects of natural resources on economies and the theorization and critique of resource curse arguments, as well as the 'Dutch disease', see Obeng-Odoom (2012) and Costa & Santos (2013), for example.

the economic structure are intentionally left in the background so as to give way to this focus. Secondly, understanding the Venezuelan oil commodity-based export economy is needed to first conceptualize these debates before going in-depth on the particular case of the AMO and mining. The Venezuelan oil sector and its overall importance in Venezuelan history and economic and societal contexts has indeed been researched⁴, as well as the discursive side of Venezuelan politics and especially 'Chavist populism'⁵. There is, however, scarce literature on how these two connect, especially in the post-Chavist era and in the new AMO project. There is research about the AMO as well by authors⁶ who recognize its significance for environmental damage, conflicts, problems in local contexts, illegalities and other themes, whose contribution is also present in this study. Furthermore, Rosales (2016) and Sánchez (2010) raise questions about the role of new international actors like China, Russia and Turkey, who and whose state-owned companies have an increasingly important role in the world of resource extraction, and thus, in the AMO. The contribution of this thesis is, then, to research the discursive side of the Venezuelan mining ventures and thus contribute to the research of a new phenomenon which, for its novelty, calls for further research.

I have now outlined the starting position and questions for this thesis as well as introduced the necessary background and necessary concepts and theories, all of which I will study in detail in the chapters to come. A brief introduction to methodology and the particular case-example is present in this chapter, as well, to further give context on what is to follow and to alert the reader of the underlying background and assumptions that this context brings with it to the investigation, to the examination of findings and the analysis of results presented at the end of the thesis. As stated before, there are plenty of interesting topics to study when it comes to extractivism as well as Venezuela with the volatile situation affecting life on many socio-economic and -ecological ways. This thesis does not pretend to be any larger than it can and, therefore, focuses on a set of phenomena that may bring contributions to a larger set of knowledge that many researchers have provided and keep providing.

⁴ Teran-Mantovani, Also *The political economy of natural resources and development: from neoliberalism to resource nationalism*, edited by Paul A. Haslam and Pablo Heidrich.

⁵ For example, Rodner 2016 and Abi-Hassan 2015, Love & Windsor 2018.

⁶ Teran-Mantovani 2018 and Rosales 2016 for example.

3. Developmentalism through extractivism

This chapter establishes the theoretical concept of neo-extractivism and links it to other concepts in order to create a framework for this thesis which is amplified in Chapter 4. I start by introducing extractivism, a proposed economic model (among other explanations) of intense natural resource exploitation, that is used to explain the behavior, actions and realities in many resource dependent countries and areas of the world. This knowledge is important as this thesis takes on the topic of a huge mining project in one of the most resource dependent economies in the world. However, it is also important for the fact that Venezuela with many other countries in the Latin American region are used as an example for a new type of extractivism, namely neo-extractivism. Along this chapter, I go through the debate on the differences between these terms as well as the entire terminology of what is meant by extractivism. The goal is to show the interconnectedness of discourses about extractivism and development and thus create a theoretical basis that allows for the analysis and investigation in this study. For the purpose of research in this particular case, one feature of extractivism is highlighted in its own section of this chapter, foreign involvement. However, other important conditions are introduced as well and further examined later on in the case study.

In the following sections, I introduce the features of this extractivist theoretical model that are relevant for this thesis. These include introducing 'extractivism' and especially the wave of 'new extractivism' as referred to by Gudynas (2010), which is an important premise and theoretical backbone of this study. After this framework is established, I first connect the 'new extractivism' to foreign investments and the Venezuelan context. I argue that it is necessary to understand the AMO case through this perspective of neo-extractivism and that foreign investments are necessary for keeping the extractivist model a viable system for the Venezuelan government to continue pursuing. I explore this phenomenon through how it manifests itself in rhetoric and discourse on the Venezuelan governmental side and how this described necessity and change is being represented by governmental actors. Furthermore, the concept of developmentalism is vital in understanding the way instruments like extractivist industries are traditionally used to promote perceived 'positive', in a very strong normative discourse, change in societies. The considerations of this chapter are divided in four short subchapters in order to help formulate an understanding of extractivism as part of the said ontology. The sections discuss the following themes: 1) Extractivism

and its basic elements, 2) neo-extractivism that has arisen especially in some Latin American 'progressive' governments, 3) the importance of foreign involvement in the system, and 4) the importance of considering neo-extractivism as an ontological concept instead of investigating it as exclusive an economic model.

3.1. Extractivism as an economic model

" There are certain extractivist activities, such as large-scale ore mining for example, that can never be made "sustainable" because their very essence is destructive". (Acosta 2013, 63)

Eduardo Gudynas (2010, 1) characterizes extractivism as a *"style of development based on the appropriation of Nature"* which manifests itself in the intensive extraction of unprocessed natural resources, and contends that activities of this type have a long history in resource rich Latin American countries. These activities are mostly recognized as those related to minerals and hydrocarbons, like in Venezuela, but can also mean other sectors that focus on the exploitation of natural resources – Gudynas (2010) gives an example of the Argentinian agricultural extractivism, for example. Acosta (2013) includes forestry and fishing to the list as well. Extractivist economies tend to often rely on exporting unprocessed (or processed in a limited way) natural resources (Gudynas 2010). Additionally, extractivism has become to be viewed increasingly as a *"...concept that enables the examination and articulation of deeper underlying logics of exploitation and subjectification that are central to the present conjuncture of capitalist globalization and neoliberalism"* (Junka-Aikio & Cortes-Severino 2017, 177). What can be learned from these explanations of extractivism, for the purpose of this study, to create a stronger understanding of what extractivist policies mean to a nation and society, is that extractivism promotes largely export based monocultural economic activities, perpetuates socio-ecological destruction and conflict and creates new definitions of land ownership and state sovereignty through deterritorialization in favor of extractivist industries and actors operating within it (ibid. 2010).

The connection between colonialism and neocolonialism and the process of extractivism is, and especially previously has been, strongly tied to exporting the extracted resources elsewhere⁷,

⁷ All forms of extractivism do not necessarily focus on uniquely exporting the resources abroad as export (see the wider conceptualization of extractivism by Junka-Aikio & Cortes-Severino 2017) but, as stated in this thesis, it is indeed recognized as one of the common and frequent features of extractivism and is an important feature in the Venezuelan oil and mineral extraction ventures.

mainly to the global North, and created few benefits to the place of origin of said resources (Acosta 2013). The latter part becomes important in understanding the definition of extractivism because, regardless of the particular form of extractivism or the extraction of a particular resource, the benefit of extractivism yields very limited benefits in local contexts (Gudynas 2010) Acosta (2013), along with many others⁸ connect this long historical continuum of extractive practices to many socio-environmental problems in areas that are highly extractivist-oriented. Accumulation of wealth to few, poverty, environmental degradation, dispossession and many other phenomena are connected to extractivism through the distortion and destruction it causes in the socio-ecological and economic spheres (ibid 2013). The mentioned monocultural economic tendency towards raw products not only deteriorates other sectors, forcing imports of many basic products, but also subjects nations practicing it to the 'mercy' of the global market where prices of raw resources fluctuate greatly (Gudynas 2010) - Gudynas (2010, 5) characterizes the consequent poor position of resource-dependent countries of South America on the global market as maintaining the "international subordination of South America". Furthermore, a change into a monocultural extractivist system entails a wide array of environmental and social problems that are especially aggravated in the local context where extractivism is practiced the most intensely (Ehrnström-Fuentes 2019). These include, but are not limited to, the loss of biodiversity, the contamination of water systems and increased pollution, including due to increased transport and infrastructure projects related to extraction of resources (Acosta 2013, Gudynas 2010, Svampa 2013). Furthermore, extractive industries contribute to the loss of livelihoods and identity-related issues of local people through generating social conflicts, loss of access to land, damage to environment and deterioration of local markets and coercive tactics by corporations (Ehrnström-Fuentes 2019, Svampa 2013).

Extractivist policies have, however, seen changes in the hands of multiple governmental actors over time. Especially in Latin America some progressive governments have challenged neoliberal models of development and demanded for participatory processes that consider and respect the environment and national contexts and sovereignty within them. A new extractivism, neo-extractivism as it is called in academia, has arisen to describe the process. In the following section the term is studied further. This brief introduction to extractivism gives a basis for the following

⁸ Gudynas (2010), Brand, Dietz & Lang (2016). Also, Moore (2017) through his forms of accumulation of wealth and 'commodity frontiers'.

definition of the important features that make extractivism a base for a large-scale developmental policy and, therefore, is fundamental in understanding the discourse studied in this thesis. I argue, following Gudynas' definition of extractivism, that extractivism is not just an economic model based on the extraction of resources from the ground – rather, it forms part of a larger way of understanding the world and thus reproduces a framework of developmentalist ontology that has larger impacts on understanding policies that lean on extractivism, especially through discursive practices.

3.2. Neo-extractivism

Extractivist activities, that have historically relied heavily on the liberalization of the extractivist sectors, have traditionally been criticized by the Latin American leftist and progressive movements. Such criticism, however, has not translated into any fundamental changes in the way the economy was structured after these groups formed governments in many Latin American countries, including Venezuela (Gudynas 2010). Additionally, Gudynas notes that it is remarkable that entirely new extractivist sectors are being promoted in these nations – Ecuador, Bolivia and Brazil given as examples. More recently, the 2016 launch of the AMO in Venezuela brings this new addition to the list of leftist and progressive governments increasing the extractivist tendencies and expanding them to new frontiers. In fact, Gudynas (2010) argues that the exploitation of natural resources in these countries has surpassed traditional extractivism to form a wider project of 'new extractivism'. What makes 'new extractivism' new is the fact that, in addition to maintaining development through the "appropriation of nature" and being highly dependent on "international involvement", the state is now the main actor and participates in activities to gain legitimacy through redistributing the revenues gained through this system to its inhabitants while maintaining the destructive tendency to the socio-ecological sphere of the older models of extractivism (ibid. 2010). Therefore, a shift towards neo-extractivist policies means a developmental model that continues with the destructive tendencies of the past and simultaneously requires foreign capital and state involvement in order to maintain this model 'legitimate' – on one side through the required financing and on the other creating national 'development', respectively. Understanding this extractivist logic is fundamental when further analyzing the discourse in Venezuela.

Thirdly, the new 'neo-extractivism' has at its very core the idea of concentrating the extractivist industries in the hands of the state. This includes efforts to nationalize resources, creating state

owned sectorial companies, clearer legislation on natural resource exploitation and higher taxation to “capture surpluses” (Gudynas 2010). This role of the state and its difference concerning a fundamental impact on a developmental model is questionable, though. Despite the increase in the role of the state, operating in the commercial profit-making sphere, the state’s actions resemble more and more those of private companies and ‘joint ventures’, present in Venezuela, putting the primacy of the state in question (ibid. 2010). What is true, however, is the increased attention on the distribution of the surplus by the state that it gets as a part of the neo-extractivist actor in the natural exploitation business. Gudynas characterizes the redistribution of this surplus to social programs as *“one of the possibly most distinctive aspects of neo-extractivism”* (ibid. 2010, 8) which creates a connection between the natural resource sector and the social programs of the state. Through this connection, we can see the relationship between the private and the public and supposed legitimacy of the whole system – the very question this thesis has set out to investigate.

Hence, taking into account the historical liberalization of natural resources, the need for foreign investment⁹, the destruction of nature and the changing nature of state actors functioning like their private-sector counterparts, there is a large similarity in the way extractivism and neo-extractivism work. Gudynas (2010) emphasizes the difference between these two models, marking the role the state has taken in neo-extractivism as a significant change from the older model, while acknowledging the similarities. According to Acosta (2013, 63), *“beyond a few differences of greater or lesser importance, the extractivist mode of accumulation seems to be at the heart of the production policies of both neoliberal and progressive governments”*, which indicates towards an understanding of the two phenomena forming part of a larger (belief) model based on the idea of accumulation of wealth, close to that of Harvey’s ‘accumulation by dispossession’ or Moore’s description of capitalist accumulation¹⁰. Finally, Brand et al. (2016) see both phenomena as manifestations of the same extractivist developmental model that manifests itself differently depending on the specific moments in different countries, pointing out that the mayor differences are tied to the forms of government. The authors conclude (Brand et al. 2016, 131) that *“we deliberately talk only of neo-extractivism, referring to a development model that is embedded in a specific historical phase of capitalist development where nature and its valuation in the world market*

⁹ Section 3.3. of this chapter.

¹⁰ Harvey (2010), Moore (2018). These concepts contribute much on the ontology of the current system of production and accumulation of wealth. For this thesis, however, their complex contribution, including world-ecology and other debates, will not be addressed further.

play a decisive role for the realization of exchange value, and which exhibits commonalities across different political regimes.”

This is the approach that I take in this thesis as well – to see extractivism as part of a larger developmental model that is tightly tied to the capitalist, neoliberal, ontology. The differences should be noted as important, however, not as an ontology-level difference but rather forming an integral part of the way these neo-extractivist progressive governments are able to operate in this capitalist system through legitimization of their operations. In the following sections, I explore important features of (neo)extractivism¹¹ that are the focus of this thesis.

3.3. Foreign capital in the extractivist model

The aforementioned position and, thus, subordination on the global market is but one of the ways in which national extractivism is tied to international processes. In this thesis I am interested, above all, in the international involvement within the national extractivist context and, therefore, the most important aspects of neo-extractivism related to the said phenomenon is examined as follows.

All models of extractivism are highly dependent on foreign investments due to providing the globalized market with little more than primary products (Gudynas 2010). Veltmeyer (2013) argues that not only is natural resource extraction observable in the strategies of very different regime types (from neoliberal to Venezuelan post-neoliberal), the reliance on exports and investments follows due to the inherent nature of extractivism. Furthermore, Veltmeyer (2013) maintains that investments do not seem to be particularly in favor of any regime type when it comes to the willingness to extract resources. In fact, Gudynas (2010) confirms this by stating that new “progressive governments”, referring to Venezuela, Bolivia and others that have seen the rise of left-wing governments in Latin America, have not opted for a fundamental change concerning extractivist policies of the former governments and have actually increased the exploitation of national resources.

Consequently, one of the strongest actors, in any form of extractivism, are the transnational corporations (TNCs) that seek opportunities in the extraction of these resources and exposing them to the global market. Extractivism, due to its reliance on raw natural resources, works on two levels

¹¹ From now on just the terms neo-extractivism and extractivism are often used to understanding the current process of Venezuela and many other Latin American societies, recognizing the aforementioned similarities and differences between the ‘classical’ and ‘neo’ forms of the phenomenon.

of foreign involvement, export (and import of the products that, due to extractivist industry, are not produced in the country) and investment (Gudynas 2010). Thus, the role of foreign capital and the presence of TNCs in the territories where natural resources are present is one of the largest questions and problematics of extractivism when thinking of a range of questions from territorial unity and sovereignty to national 'development'. In fact, due to extractivism and the difficult access to resources, TNCs usually operate in enclaves, bringing little benefits to the larger outside national communities, and due to the primacy of natural resource exploitation of the national economy, can exercise mayor influence in the country's politics as well (Acosta 2013). The social and ecological problems arising from this type of economic activity of an entirely isolated TNC-operations in a deterritorialized state, where responsibility is spread ambiguously between the TNC, the state and other potential actors, is well reported (ibid. 2013). Furthermore, during a decline in prices of natural resources, countries tend to need foreign capital even more to maintain their extractivist mode of production viable, resulting in larger concessions to the TNCs as a way to attract investments (Brand et al. 2016).

This importance of foreign capital in discussions about developmental topics is therefore a significant part of debates, especially in discussions about the mining sector and the investments of multinational corporations to that sector (Banks 1993). Following Gudynas' introduction to extractivism introduced above, I look into investments through their links to the mentioned concept of natural resource exploitation. In the background of my approach, there lies the notion that investments are to be viewed in the light of the rupturing potential of extractivist policies, mostly in the national context, and hence deny the notion of the 'neoclassical' economic theories that emphasize multinationals and their investments as 'beneficial' to economic development , or even the overall 'development' of the nation (ibid. 1993). The important notion to grasp here is that foreign capital, be it in the form of investments, aid or other, has a strong impact on national policies in giving influence and power to TNCs in the national sphere of influence. This ceding of the state's sovereignty to foreign actors is especially important in contexts where a national policy and discourse is being built around a strong criticism of the neoliberal order. There are many other forms through which extractivist economies are tied to international capital, often in neocolonial terms. For this thesis, the importance of international capital in the analysis comes from the understanding that it is fundamentally connected to the process of securing the investments needed for production and revenue through the logic of extractivism. Understanding the negative impacts that this system

causes is important as well as understanding that progressive governments of Latin America often go against this same system of neoliberal privatization:

“One sees, then, a peculiar relationship in that the state seeks to capture surpluses from extractivism, and then uses part of them in these social programs, managing to use this social legitimacy to defend its extractive activities. In other words, although these governments can be said to have distanced themselves from the classical Left by their support of conventional extractivism, they return to the Left and manage to justify themselves as progressives because of their social programs. At the same time, these social activities need increasing financing, and thus these same governments become dependent on extractivism to capture financial resources. This becomes one of the factors explaining the support of these activities and the persistent search for foreign investment.” (Gudynas 2010, 8)

It is through this element of neo-extractivism, a rather unique relationship, that this thesis bases its questions on. The last element that I introduce here indicates the discursive focus and ties neo-extractivism to a larger ontology that I base the analysis on and that is later introduced in chapter four.

3.4. Neo-extractivism, developmentalism and ontology

Through the work of the authors presented above, the underlying mechanism of neo-extractivism does not present any new revolutionary ways of understanding the world. Rather, a neo-extractivist model, through its focus on economic development and then redistributing the revenue gained, seen in this light starts to resemble developmentalist ideas. By ‘developmentalism’ I do not solely refer to the economic model that many economists have considered to be the popular *modus operandi* of the last decades when concerning the goals to achieve ‘development’ in the Global South (Nederveen Pieterse 1991); rather, I refer to the authors who go beyond this categorization to enforce the link between developmentalism and neo-extractivism, for developmentalism is not merely an economic model come and gone – rather, it is part of an ontology of neoliberalism that emphasizes the primacy of economy. This link is important when studying the way neo-extractivist policies are being carried out and exposing the ‘old tricks’ of neoliberalism in the discourse of neo-extractivism.

Several authors¹² point out the pervasive nature of developmentalism, creating a larger understanding of the phenomenon as something that can cover many different policies without contradicting its overall message. The word 'development' already in itself contains a significant historical and normative burden and it is from this tradition of 'development' that developmentalism seems to gain strength. Rather than an 'out-of-fashion' economic model, developmentalism becomes something more – a belief in something better, 'development'. Consequently, Nederveen Pieterse (1991) sees that developmentalism means giving primacy to economic solutions in fixing problems in other sections of society and involves the normative idea of 'development', a term that is ambiguous and without much meaning without a context but always in conventional developmentalist understanding referring to a positive change. Furthermore, development thinking has at its background a discourse of modernity and modernization theory (Koponen et al 2007, 54-55, 60-62). In fact, when identifying developmentalism to a condition of Western 'modernity', development can be seen as a social construction that has no objective meaning outside discourse (Ramírez-Cendrero 2018). This belief in (primarily economically produced) 'development' has long roots and reached a high point in the 1970s that the United Nations had named the "decade of development" (Wallerstein 2005). However, to think that developmentalism has ceased to exist just because the terminology of development has changed, I argue, is erroneous. As follows, I present the authors to support this stance which helps this thesis to build on the foundation that focuses on the ontological position of which neo-extractivism is a manifestation.

First of all, the characterization of developmentalism by Gudynas functions as a guideline for perceiving developmentalism as pervasive: *"But the idea of development is very resistant. Just as broad sectors of civil society were criticizing it, there were others demanding access to development, or calling for more development. Each new developmentalist vision – with neoextractivism being the most recent – serves to keep that dream alive"* (Gudynas 2013, 28). Not only is developmentalism recognized as an over-encompassing ideological position on the power of 'development', Gudynas directly links neo-extractivism as a manifestation of the same.

Secondly, Adaman et al. (2019) discuss the relationship between activism and neoliberalism where the latter remains a hegemonic position by extending its discourse to state institutions brought along by the former. In other words, neo-extractivism means a larger involvement of the

¹² For example, Gudynas 2010, Acosta 2013, Lander 2013, Ramírez-Cendrero 2018.

state and some reorganization of economic activities but only when following the 'rules' of neoliberal discourse, the belief in the primacy of economic solutions to social problems – the authors name this “neoliberal developmentalism” (ibid. 2019, 5). In this definition, all three terms can be linked together under the same problem of the ontological position of neoliberalism which further implies a depoliticization through economization. Neo-extractivism and neoliberalism are not conflicted, and are in fact part of the same, because “*[o]nce human behavior is conceptualized as a form of cost-benefit calculus, neoliberalism can accommodate a range of theoretical and political positions with diverse policy implications, including those that can be identified as state interventionism*” (ibid. 2019, 5).

My intention with this section has been to show how neo-extractivism is tied to a conventional neoliberalist ontology that supports economic measures over others and show this link through developmentalism. I made this choice to show that at the base of neo-extractivist discourse lies neoliberalism. In addition, developmentalism is present to 'manage' neoliberalism and confine the discussion to a feature of neoliberalist thought closest to this thesis, namely 'development'. I deem the rather small scale of the introduction to these terms enough for the purposes of this study in order to give space to the actual focus. The space in this thesis limits the treatment of the topic but it needs to be acknowledged that with the presentation above, I have steered the attention towards a larger scale ontological problem of 'development' and neoliberalism to understand that terms such as these do not present universalities but are rather only interpretations, filled with normativity. Political positions and contextual and temporal contexts (neo-extractivism) can then be seen as discursive manifestations of something larger. This view helps with the analysis of the Venezuelan situation significantly, as is demonstrated after delving further into the discursive features of this research in Chapter 4.

As we have seen, conceptualizing neo-extractivism is a complex process. In this chapter I have intended to introduce the main features that researchers agree upon are part of extractivism and revealed some differences in categorizing the phenomenon. Thus, the main take from this chapter is, firstly, the acknowledgement of developmentalism and the neoliberal processes behind it and their connection to extractivism which, however 'reformed' it might be, relies on the old 'belief' in (economic and then other forms of) development. This part is the framework for this thesis which becomes clearer when connected with the method of critical discourse analysis of this thesis. At the

same time, it is worth mentioning that the developmentalist ontology presented here represents but one way (yet perhaps still the most widespread) of understanding the 'reality' around us. Many other (local, indigenous and wider spread) forms exist that challenge it in many ways. As this thesis deals with the matter of governmental discourse, these other forms are excluded from the analysis except for when the context so requires. In the case of Venezuela, we will later see a construction of a discourse on alternatives to a neoliberal model. It is important to acknowledge this (although justified) lack of other considerations to fortify my position as giving a critique to the hegemonic ontology of neoliberalist developmentalism and not as attributing its economic theses as any more of a 'real' value for constructing 'reality' as any other ontology.

Secondly, looking at extractivism through the presented elements we can find two important guidelines for this study that make the understanding of neo-extractivism fundamental: first, the state's reliance on natural resource extraction and exportation for maintaining social programs and rent distribution, and second, the role of international capital in this process. Furthermore, these elements were presented to indicate that neo-extractivism is a complex model that encompasses societies in a way that goes beyond the economic sector. This has implications when acknowledging the seemingly impossible relation between the two important parts of the process and through this relation it introduces interesting questions to studying the ways neo-extractivism can be legitimized by the government.

This thesis's focus is on Venezuela because of the interest I have towards the extremely complicated situation the country faces due to its extractivist history and its economic structure that heavily relies on this extraction of resources. This study is a small contribution to creating a wider understanding of a societal, economic and political context that could easily be simplified through events unfolding and being reported about the situation at the time of the writing of the thesis. The idea of this thesis is to show that events that can seemingly be simplified to a set of rather a-historically based political decisions do hide a complicated (historical) set of processes and events that spur from the hegemonic discourses of that context. This is important in order to further study the situation in Venezuela, or in fact, other contexts where extractivism is present under a certain set of conditions that become evident throughout this thesis.

4. Methodology: Critical Discourse Analysis

A basic requirement in research is that it establishes its framework to justify the choices in the study, its methods of analysis and a larger theoretical and scientific position. This chapter intends on doing just that by establishing the epistemological and ontological position of the thesis through introducing the methodology and tools of analysis used in this study. As this thesis focuses on the way new extractivist projects are presented and justified by governmental actors, that have strongly positioned themselves against the hegemonic economic model represented by the international actors investing in the very same extractivist project, language becomes an integral part of research. To study these discursive elements of natural resource policies, I lean on the strong tradition of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) that is well established in the social sciences. In this chapter I firstly present the broader analytical framework of the thesis by simultaneously introducing the tradition of discourse analysis. Secondly, I introduce a more specific way to employ the potential of CDA to the purposes of this study by drawing from the ideas of Fairclough's (1992) methods of analyzing discourse. Following this, the broader justification of the data, where I explain the reasons for selecting this set of data and the process of collecting it. I also build the basis for Chapter 5, the data analysis and discussion. Consequently, the research questions are explored in light of the discursive approach introduced in this chapter.

4.1. 'Discourse' in the discourse analysis

"If a researcher is interested in the ways in which knowledge is formulated and validated by society as truth, then discourse analysis is likely an excellent methodology to use." (Dittmer 2010, 275). These words by Dittmer about the usability of discourse analysis in research based on discovering 'truths', taken-for-granted assumptions on the functioning of societies, power relations and actors within this complex discursive world functions as a clear introduction to what this thesis aspires to, following the tradition of CDA. When a goal is as broad as studying "the ways in which knowledge is formulated and validated by society as truth", it is of extreme importance, for the clarity of the study and for the ease of the reader, to state the premises, the framework of the study, as well as explain what is meant by the concepts, words and terminology used. 'Truth' and 'knowledge' are after all

words with no trivial importance when creating an understanding of the societies around us as “truth” in discourse analysis is not an objective concept and rather a feature of a particular discourse, and knowledge can be pursued with a wide array of methodological means.

Forming a part of research in development studies, and in social sciences in general, this study goes beyond the linguistic notions and analysis of discourse, in order to contribute to the understanding of power relations and how truths are created and maintained in socially specific situations. To understand this difference, it is to be noted that academically the terminology here can be divided into two different ‘discourses’ - the ‘discourse’ and ‘Discourse’¹³(Dittmer 2010, 275). Discourse (capitalized) becomes the (albeit difficult) subject of study which, according to Dittmer (ibid., 275) is the “culturally-specific mode of existence” and is therefore the one that groups lower case discourses under a larger term from which meanings and power relations can be observed. In this study, I have introduced this categorization mainly to affirm the existence of these two different ways people use to refer to discourse in different situations. Additionally, they are presented as distinct elements as I use both in the present research. They also function as a way to clarify the difference of textual elements and the practices and imaginaries they create, when forming the framework for this thesis. The understanding of this thesis about discourse falls closer to the upper-case Discourse and, therefore, when discourse as a term is used, it is referred to that Discourse. Small case discourse here is understood more as textual discursive elements that form discourses and is not in my study referred to as discourse.

4.2. Discursive theory of social processes

Having defined my interpretation and use of the complex field of the word ‘discourse’, it is now my intention to demonstrate what is the foundational ontological approach to discourse in this study. As Dittmer (2010, 276) states, discourse analysis is not a simple tool that has one uniform way of understanding the world and tools to unveil it, but rather hosts two larger approaches to discourse

¹³ Firstly, the linguistic, lower case discourse which consists of the “phrasing and word choice that is associated with ‘language-in-use’” (Gee, 1999, 7 in Dittmer 2010, 275) and “the ways in which issues and spaces are framed through this textual form of discourse are of importance, as this is the most empirically observable aspect of language’s impact on, and constitution of , the social world” (ibid. 2010, 275). Secondly, the upper-case Discourse constitutes to the process “through which these ‘truths’ [the ones established in the discourse] become embodied and enacted” (ibid. 2010, 275).

analysis based on their view on discourse's relation with 'reality' – the structuralist and post-structuralist strands of thought. These differences are not trivial for the nature of discourse in relation to agency, and structure has consequences in the focus of the analysis and in the overall positioning of the thesis on the ontological and epistemological spectrum.

The main differences in positioning these two strands of thought, for the sake of this study, are the ways they treat discourse's relation to subjects, agency and power. The structuralist view, leaning heavily on Marxist thought and the work of Gramsci, emphasizes class and places (cultural) hegemony and ideology as constitutive of the discursive reality in which discourse's effects exist only after "ontologically prior" subjects (Dittmer 2010, 276). Whereas many structuralists focus on the macro-level, poststructuralism, influenced by Foucault and his notion of 'governmentality', focuses on micro-level manifestations and sees individual subjectivities being just as affected and created by discourses, leading to an understanding where ideology is but one part of what constitutes a discourse and where discourse is even more tied to a space and time and hides in it multiple, shifting subjectivities (ibid. 2010, 276). It is worth noting, however, that constraining the variety of discourse in what has been described here does not constitute the full extent of academics. Attempts to combine aspects of both, or just to reposition one of the two through debates between the two approaches, has brought forth many ways to make sense of the role of discourse and all what comes with it. I next introduce the key notions this thesis leans on, based heavily on Laclau and Mouffe. I see this focus on discourse as an essential part of development studies and its insistence on relativity and context based situational knowledge, starting from the tradition on works like Edward Said's (1978) *Orientalism*.

"Despite the blurring of theoretical boundaries during many discourse analyses, it is nonetheless important to be explicit about the theoretical background that the researcher brings to any project, as that background then has bearing on the methodology undertaken in the project" (Dittmer 2010, 279).

In this thesis I have approached discourse, and the concepts related to analyzing it, by relying on a view that is close to the post-structuralist strain of thought. Specifically, I proceed to introduce some key background and assumptions, as well as the reasons behind it, through the theory of discourse by Laclau and Mouffe (2001). I write this thesis with the goal of understanding better the questions

presented earlier and it is not within the capacity of this thesis to engage in large debate over rivaling theories of social sciences. It is, nevertheless, important to show the basis for the discourse analysis and Laclau and Mouffe can offer much to that end. As follows, I introduce the necessary theory of post-structural discourse.

Firstly, the large contribution, as stated earlier, of post-structural approach is its focus on discourse as a center of what can be understood as existing 'reality'. This, consequently, makes it impossible to establish any durable and essential 'true' projection of reality (Dittmer 2010, 277). How is 'reality' through discourses constituted, then? Laclau and Mouffe offer an explanation by explaining discourse through elements, moments and articulation (Laclau and Mouffe 2001, 105). To briefly summarize the idea: discursive **elements** are signifiers, subjects, objects, practices that have multiple meanings and by themselves contribute to little. However, at the moment of an **articulation practice** individual elements take on specific meanings that fit a specific context (becoming **moments**), **excluding** the other meanings. At the same time, these articulation practices tie together these elements, creating a **discursive totality** where both the newly created moments and the totality have a fixed meaning (Stengel and Nabers 2019). This creation of a discourse necessarily requires the exclusion of the other meanings of the elements as the 'Other' is needed to form a discourse just as the 'Self', but this also means an unstable discourse that is constantly threatened by the same excluded outside meanings that help to constitute it (ibid. 2019). This all means that discourse (as well as the individual meanings within) are temporary, incomplete and unstable and that meanings depend on the context in which they are placed (ibid. 2019). Additionally, Laclau and Mouffe conclude that this definition of discourse means that it is not limited to linguistic phenomena and, that there is no distinction between discursive and non-discursive practices which gives their theory of discourse a larger ontological theoretical positioning (ibid. 2001, 107).

Secondly, it is important to know the concept of hegemony before proceeding further as hegemonies represent key power relations between discourses. Stengel and Nabers (2019, 255) explain how hegemonies become constituted through hegemonization "*...when certain discourses manage to establish themselves as universally valid*". To understand this concept further, hegemony "*involves a specific demand (a particularity) functioning as a symbol not only of broad range of social demands but also of the (unattainable) ideal of a perfect, that is, fully constituted society (the*

*universal), in which all demands are fulfilled” (ibid. 2019, 255) . A successful hegemony means that there is one discourse that claims and has support as the only acceptable way to understanding the world (Dittmer 2010). Following the exclusion logic of meanings and discourses, Sutherland (2005, 190) explains, the position of Laclau and Mouffe as follows: “*power struggles reveal points of friction between rival political projects and ultimately, between antagonistic world-views. Furthermore, challenges to the received wisdom of a given society are depicted as sources of identity crises, in which notions generally accepted to be “common sense” are re-evaluated*”. The conflictive nature of hegemony and antagonisms that Laclau and Mouffe establish serve as an important point when analyzing a speech that reproduces hegemonic discourse in fields as conflictive as mining, TNCs and development.*

For the purposes of this thesis, the important take from post-structuralism is its negation of essentialist universals, the understanding that discourses are tied to specific situations in space and time and that there exists a ‘plurality of antagonisms’ - responses to hegemony. Analyzing this plurality raises questions in any set of data the researcher chooses to work with and in the case of this study, that data is a collection of publications and communications of the Venezuelan governmental authorities which already creates many implications based on the ontology and epistemology originating from this approach. There is the question of power, the identification of the discourses and which hegemony(-ies) they represent. Where does the discourse originate from, what are its parts and what does it represent? Is the speech itself representing, in fact, an antagonism of another hegemonic position? There would be many more questions related to the many antagonisms that arise from social movements (Laclau and Mouffe 2001, 159) and the questions of subordination and oppression related to them. This thesis, due to its limited space, focuses instead on discourse through the articulation at the governmental level and what it represents as a producer of discourse with relative authority and power.

The focus on governmental actors of this thesis requires a recognition of the power that these actors have when (re)producing a certain discourse. For example, the successor of the Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez, the current president Nicolás Maduro, through his active role in speaking about the country’s mining policy, is participating in a discourse that contributes to how certain phenomena are perceived and how certain imaginary is being (re)produced. As an authoritarian

leader of a country, that discourse has significant weight and as demonstrated below, represents a part in this conflicting relationship between hegemonic and antagonistic discourses under the definition of Laclau and Mouffe. Using a post-structuralist starting point, I am able to go beyond the materialistic sphere of mining and economic policy and move to the sphere of how certain policies can be justified under a certain reproduction of hegemonic discourse. This also means that questions that have become technical or otherwise taken for granted are shown in a normative light; taking into consideration everything stated above, there is no reason that the extractivist policies of Venezuela and the apparent conflict with the public-private interests would be excluded from this normative relation. In continuation, I briefly represent the method of the critical discourse analysis by Fairclough that I use. There are some important differences in the way that Fairclough approaches discourse compared to Laclau and Mouffe. For example, the relation of what constitutes a discourse, or discursive moments, for Fairclough is more narrowly defined because he sees discourse as one element among others (Fairclough 1992, 63). While Fairclough's views on discourse do not align with those of Laclau and Mouffe, I see no reason why his method of analyzing discourse would not fit into the view represented by the two authors as the way I employ Fairclough's method is more a question of a systematic gathering of discourse data rather than that of a larger debate on ontology, which these two differing views on the nature of discursivity can evoke in a different context outside the scope of this thesis.

4.3. Approaching CDA – three 'pronged' method by Fairclough

Having introduced the ontological and theoretical basis for the thesis as well as the analytical framework of the discourse analysis, I now introduce in more detail the method established by Fairclough (1992) for critical discourse analysis. Dittmer (2010, 279) asserts that one difficulty of conducting discourse analysis is the fact that few examples of a clear explanation of the process itself exist. One of these few explanatory models, however, is the method presented by Fairclough, which is based on a "three-pronged approach", containing the following three "prongs": 1) textual analysis, 2) discursive practice and 3) social practice (Dittmer 2010, 283). All the steps are explained as follows.

Textual analysis

Fairclough (1992, 74) identifies text analysis under four categories: “*vocabulary*”, “*grammar*”, “*cohesion*” and “*text structure*” and declares that textual analysis focuses both on form and meaning in the text. What is important to know for this thesis is that the first level of analysis, that of the text, has multiple ways to approach it. As stated above, I do not focus on purely linguistic questions on this thesis and, therefore, stay away from deeper analysis of the language in this field. Nevertheless, it is to be noted that word choices, metaphors, text structure and many other categories of textual analysis form an integral part of a discourse. Furthermore, they also constitute in the building of imaginaries, reveal knowledge systems and assumptions around a certain discourse and create meanings. Whether talking about intentionally chosen and used terms in an argumentative text, (like the speeches of this thesis), or unconscious wordings that hide belief-systems or assumptions, these discursive elements tell much about the overall discourse. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that the CDA of this thesis start with an analysis of the text itself.

Discursive practice

The second analytical level works as a ‘mediator’ between the micro- (text) and macro-level (social practice) of the analysis of processes of discourse (Fairclough 1992, 86). This level contains the “processes of text production, distribution and consumption, and the nature of these processes varies between different types of discourse according to social factors” (ibid. 1992 86). This means that the importance is placed on who produces texts, who they are meant for, who consumes the text and in which context of knowledge, tradition and resources these texts are produced and interpreted. Consequently, analysis of discursive practice helps to map out, and must be done with, the textual analysis, giving sense to the textual elements. Discourse types, larger context and intertextuality all reduce the ‘ambivalence’ of the discourse that emerges from purely textual reading of the elements. Following Foucault, Fairclough (ibid. 1992, 83) explains that through these processes, that can contain heavily ideological elements, texts are interpreted by the consumers who help to ‘patch-up- the meanings of the text and make sense of the text. This complex array of discursive elements that gain meaning through contextual discursive practices is linked, therefore, to the relativist world constituted by discourses that Laclau and Mouffe present in their work.

Knowing that the first two prongs are fundamentally linked to each other, my analysis moves systematically by finding relevant textual features of the material and mapping them out and grouping them, and then further analyses them through the second prong. This is the principal of the analysis but it is not as simple, though, as assumptions when identifying, grouping and reading the textual elements exist with these elements all the time – it is impossible to detach meaning and even my own assumptions for the purposes of first categorizing any data. As I am interested in the way the governmental discourse 'justifies' and deal with the apparent conflict of the extractive policies of international investment and simultaneous resource nationalism, meanings and imaginaries are especially interesting. Moreover, the historical context of natural resources and the Bolivarian socialist project of Venezuela bring additional discursive elements that are fundamental to the modern discourse and therefore also important components to analyze on both of these levels.

Social practice

The last prong is the very representation of the macro-scale part of the analysis. This is the part of analysis that draws on the concepts of power and hegemony and focuses on the social practice aspect of discourse (Fairclough, 1992, 86) – namely how discourses shape the social world. Here I call attention to the previous discussion of the discursive social theory of Laclau and Mouffe which works as the basis for understanding this macro-scale analysis. As I have already established the theoretical basis to this thesis, here I provide, only some further remarks on the ways that I use these concepts in my analysis, combining them with the two earlier prongs.

The process of hegemonization serves in the analysis of the data of this study, especially when creating an understanding of the discourse that Venezuelan president Nicolás Maduro is reproducing – identifying hegemonic discourse, how it is reproduced and what the features of it are, among other questions. This is also supported by the understanding of the elements that create 'the other' and the antagonisms that stand in opposition to the hegemonic discourse which, on the other hand, requires a reaction from the hegemonic discourse in confronting these oppositions.

As we have seen, analyzing discourse is extremely complex. The three prongs identified by Fairclough and the ontological positions taken, nevertheless, come in useful especially when categorizing and handling the data, from identifying textual elements and situating them in the

context of discursive practices to social practices for a larger conversation. I use all three prongs in analyzing the data in this study, as elaborated in the next section.

4.4. Material and methods

With the critical discourse analysis as the chosen approach for the analysis of the findings in this study, it is necessary to establish the methods and material on which this analysis is based. In this section I introduce both of them through an introduction to the government-based documentation that serves as the main source of data for this thesis.

I have categorized the material into three separate sections to justify the choice behind each of them, dividing them according to the three main types of material that they represent. I have identified the three types of material as follows: 1) The opening speech by president Nicolás Maduro at the event to officiate the AMO project, 2) the communications and news articles related to this new project published by the country's Ministry of Mining and 3) the National Development Plans' sections that relate to mining.

As all this material constitutes the analysis of the same phenomenon, they are presented together, except when highlighting a specific piece of the data in the final analysis and discussion section, as their categorization of this chapter is merely to give a sense of the data.

President Maduro opening up the AMO

The opening speech of president Nicolás Maduro at the Venezuelan Central Bank in 2016, where he establishes the basis for the new Orinoco Mining Arch and opens it officially for foreign investment, serves as an interesting 'text' for analysis¹⁴. The speech was held in the presence of potential investors from influential TNCs, Venezuelan governmental actors and representatives as well as some local artisanal miners. Furthermore, the entirety of the event was televised and shown live on the Venezuelan state-run television station, the VTV, an important point to note considering hegemonic formations. The event contained statements by other actors in the mining sector as well, who formed the 'panel' of presenters: the minister of petroleum and mining, the president of the Venezuelan state-owned mining company, and the director of the Venezuelan Central Bank, among the most important ones, in addition to the president.

¹⁴ See appendix A for the said speech.

I chose this particular material for its significance to the AMO project. After reviewing material for the analysis, this particular speech by the president at the opening of the AMO project fit extremely well with the objects of this study: it is a speech that 1) is presented by a governmental authority figure (the president) 2) operates as the introduction to the new extractivist project that my research focuses on 3) addresses development strategy in a broader sense in terms of the importance of natural resources in the Venezuelan development strategy history (normative, assumptions, history) and 4) is directed, at least to a large extent, to the TNCs to invite them to participate in the project. As can be seen, the four points of the material reveal already some important connections to the discourse analysis that was conducted. I conducted the data analysis by first transcribing the speech (as it was not available in written form).

The news articles by the Ministry

The next piece of material is constituted by the communications and news articles published by the Ministry of Mining on their Internet-site. I gathered the material from the news archive of the site, saved it to a manageable format on the computer and divided the material in two parts.

Firstly, I investigated all the news stories related to the new mining project from the first published article available: from August 2nd, 2016, to March 30th, 2017¹⁵. The time period chosen represents the earliest available news stories published by the newly formed ministry of Mining, which coincides with the AMO project's start. The end date of March 2017 was chosen for two reasons. First, I had to limit the amount of material to a manageable amount which, after 42 articles at the end of March, seemed justified seeing that the themes and style of writing had recurred enough in the articles to serve an understanding of the commonalities in the discursive elements of the publications. Secondly, following the speech-material, I analyze the foundational context of the new mining ventures, for which I judge that the months that coincide with the launch of the AMO project provide a sufficient understanding of the situation.

The second part of this material consists of the news articles of the same archive that are explicitly about foreign involvement in the new mining projects. This contains publications about foreign capital of the first part and, additionally, news that I categorized to have 'foreign capital' –

¹⁵ Appendix B showcases these news articles.

related content, as its main theme until the end of 2017¹⁶. As only six¹⁷ (out of 42) news publications of the main part of the data deal mainly with the topic of foreign involvement, the purpose of this part of the data is to function more as a manner to check and confirm the findings of the first part – i.e. to see, if there are any changes in the discursive elements in the data when twenty additional new publications are added to the data. This addition does not mean that I have ignored the fact that a lack of news publications of a certain theme does indeed form a part of the analysis. In discovering which topic is favored over another by the discourse, is only an additional way of checking for possible changes or additions in the discourse that should be taken into account.

The developmental plans of Venezuela

Lastly, I investigated the Venezuelan Development Plans of 2013-2019 and 2019-2025¹⁸ which establish the wider developmental orientation and goals that the government claims to aspire towards. The time periods of the two plans represent a crucial moment in Venezuelan governmental aspirations as the earlier plan was released before the plummeting oil prices and the economic and social crisis and did not yet include the new focus on mining and the AMO.

For the analysis, I looked into the relevant sections of each document, namely the sectoral oil and mining plans, compared the documents between each other and with the speech and news data presented above.

The presentation of the methodology in this chapter has outlined the importance of discourse in research. As the focus is on a particular discourse at a particular time in history, contextual information and understanding is needed to be able to create any sense of 'reality' through the discursive elements that are analyzed. To understand the discourse of governmental actors at the launch of the new extractive project of the mining industry, this situational context is very much at the core of the research. Therefore, before heading into the CDA and discussion about my findings, the following chapter is dedicated to creating the context around Venezuelan extractivism under the post-Chavist era of president Nicolás Maduro's government.

¹⁶ See Appendix C for these additional articles.

¹⁷ Appendix B.6, B.7, B.20, B.26, B.27, B.33.

¹⁸ Appendix D.

4.5. Limitations of CDA

There are challenges to all types of methodologies and the methods through which the researcher establishes understanding of the questions they raise. CDA is not free of these challenges either and indeed poses a number of limitations for research. Here, I briefly address some CDA – related limitations and challenges related to this study.

Firstly, as described above, CDA is based on the study of how actors perceive, describe, present and create images of the world through discourse and, therefore, offers little in understanding any universal truths or any one set of ideas that form ‘reality’ (Dittmer 2015). This world of subjectivity and normative meanings affects the researcher as well, and therefore, a continuous self-reflection and distance from the data is needed from the researcher (Wodak 2011, 40). It is through the framework established above that I offer the reader a way to understand the positions that I take in this study. However, as I establish in the consequent chapters, I do approach the material and its analysis through that material itself avoiding to making assumptions beyond what is introduced in the material of this thesis.

Second of all, CDA offers no clear-cut methods for research and thus it is up to the researcher to make sense of the appropriate methods for the particular research project (Caballero Mengibar 2015). This aspect, together with the fact that interpretation of the material for CDA requires an ample understanding of the (economic, political, social, ecological...) context in which the discourses are (re)produced (ibid. 2015), means that methods can vary much from study to study which requires more from the researcher in terms of finding the appropriate methods and explaining these choices to the reader (Wodak . 2011, 40, 52).

In this chapter, I have presented the way I approach CDA with the aim of addressing the limitations and challenges of CDA to outline the position that this study takes. CDA has its limitations but at the same time presents the researcher with tools and possibilities of studying the world of meanings. The way in which discourse is connected to the ‘reality’ that people perceive, power relations and the situational context is a rich environment for research. The object of this study operates in this environment and thus benefits from what CDA has to offer.

5. Venezuelan extractivism and the Orinoco Delta

To investigate the research question presented above, I turn to Latin America, where neo-extractivism is visible through resource rich nations such as Bolivia, Ecuador and Chile (Gudynas 2010), and specifically to Venezuela, where some forms of extractivism have existed for decades through the abundance of oil reserves in Venezuelan territory (Teran-Mantovani 2018). However, Venezuela is not only interesting because of its oil, but also due to other phenomena. First of all, the extremely high dependence on extractivism as revenue for the state and the current economic and social crisis that the country is going through (Rosales 2017) makes the country a timely case-study from the sheer point of view of the claimed dangers of resource exploitation based economies. Secondly, to combat this crisis by introducing new commodities, the government has initiated a new large scale project to extract minerals that before had been left relatively unexploited, from a vast Venezuelan territory called the Mining Arch of Orinoco (*Arco Minero del Orinoco*) (Teran-Mantovani 2018). As follows, I present why exactly this case is interesting from a discourse analysis perspective over new international investors, and with extractivism being put forth as an economic development model.

In this chapter, I present the Venezuelan context of natural resource exploitation as well as other political and social processes that have led through nationalization of natural resources to the current economic model. Additionally, this chapter serves to situate these processes to the formation of national imaginaries based on, primarily, oil as development. Furthermore, I introduce the specific case of the AMO and its antecedents that have led to the current situation. All of this helps to reinforce the analysis of Chapter 5 by contextualizing the question. I begin this chapter by mapping out a brief historical overview on Venezuelan extractivism which I present side by side with the changes in the political and economic situation, focusing on the history of oil extraction and its links to the Chavist-era reforms and the new focus on mining that has become more visible with president Maduro. This is followed by an overview of the case of AMO itself by detailing what led to the process, what is being done and what the institutional basis for it is.

5.1. An extractivist model long in the making

Venezuela has an extensive history of ample hydrocarbon resource extraction that dates to the beginning of the last century and goes through several phases of nationalization of these resources to reach the current situation of the “Bolivarian revolution” started by Hugo Chávez in 1999 (Teran-Mantovani 2018). This change in the structure of the country’s economic base and its social fabric started with two oil booms, of 1914 and 1922 (ibid. 2018), that paved the way for a long hundred-year process of oil becoming a dominant influence in the political and social fields of the petro-State. From humble beginnings, the Venezuelan oil industry grew to be a fundamental part of the structure of the Venezuelan state at the second half of the 20th century (ibid. 2015). At this time, the vast oil resources had become part of an important economic strategy and the state saw to protect the resource and make it a fundamental source of revenue through exportation. The founding of the Venezuelan Oil Company (CVP) and Venezuela being a founding member of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) in 1960 both strengthened this position (ibid. 2015).

Venezuela possesses a huge reserve of petroleum that the country considers to be the largest proven reserve in the world (PDVSA 2016). This reserve, since its foundational origins, has been continuously and increasingly employed as a source of wealth. Throughout the history of oil extraction, the industry has relied on revenues from crude or minimally refined oil and on the allocation of this revenue to other activities meant to diversify the economy, a strategy that it has largely retained to this day (Péné-Anette et al. 2012). During this period of time, Venezuela has undergone diverse models of political leadership and policy positions out of which the current ‘Bolivarian’ model is the focus of this thesis.

The crises of the 1980s and 1990s, that included a ‘bust’ in oil commodity prices, saw the socialist Hugo Chávez’s rise to power in 1999 bringing in a new social and economic project for the country which, regardless of the earlier ‘bust’ and very different economic policy message, also depended on the revenue from oil (Teran-Mantovani 2018). In fact, the structure of the developmental state reliant on oil was strengthened, following a ‘Chavist’ idea of popular participation as well as measures to steer economic action to be more socially oriented, following the principle of the ‘21st century socialism’ that Chávez proposed as an alternative to capitalism for Venezuela (ibid. 2018, Burbach et al. 2013, 49). In this ‘Chavist’ project the government increasingly redirected the oil revenues to social programs, establishing a mechanism of rent distribution

(Rosales 2016, Corrales and Penfold 2011). Rent from the petroleum industry formed part of a bigger set of reforms of the country's institutions which were accompanied by a new discourse that emphasized anti-imperialist rhetoric, critique of capitalism and an emphasis on the unity of the Venezuelan people with Chávez as a central figure of this new project of the nation (Rodner 2016). The support for the project was backed by social imaginaries constructed around nationalized oil as the way to 'modernity' for the country, which was strongly present when the government spoke of the oil industry (ibid. 2018).

During the early years of the presidency of Hugo Chavez, the government did redistribute considerable amounts of oil export revenue to social programs, improving in many variables including poverty reduction and life expectancy (Teran-Mantovani 2018). The success of this policy has partly been given to the momentum given by a global rise in commodity prices that characterized the era (ibid. 2018) which coincided with the rise of progressive governments in many Latin American countries, like Bolivia and Ecuador, for example (Veltmeyer 2013). In fact, Veltmeyer (2013) singles out Venezuela as an example where the new extractivist model actually managed to create large-scale rent redistribution that was directed to social programs, unlike in other Latin American country where center-left governments rose to power in the early 2000s. The Chávez era was characterized by the establishment of the 21st century socialist agenda for Venezuela which relied heavily on the personality of Hugo Chávez and his ability to bring much of Venezuela together in support of the Chavist agenda (Burbach et al. 2013, 49; 76). During his presidency Venezuela not only underwent many reforms that focused on the promise of giving "power to the people"⁵⁸ but the Bolivarian project also faced many challenges related to corruption, domestic production deficiencies and political opposition (ibid. 2013, 63; 70-74). Burbach et al. (2013, 76) recognize the fundamental role of Chávez in the revolutionary process and managing these challenges up until his re-election in 2012. The following year, Hugo Chávez died of cancer, however, and an increased political unrest followed the presidential elections that saw the former vice-president Nicolás Maduro elected (Rosales 2016). While Maduro has mostly continued on the same path as Chávez in terms of policy and rhetoric (Abi-Hassan 2015), the problems in the electoral process, the aggressive governmental response to protests that followed and the economic hardships the country was about to face brought upon a new political context for the post-Chavist era (Rosales 2016).

Following the establishment of a government based on the idea of the 'Bolivarian Revolution', Venezuela experienced a period of economic growth which not only maintained

Venezuela in its middle-income rank of countries but also improved in many variables, such as the poverty-gap, education and health (Rosales 2016) that would conventionally be linked to the 'development or modernization' of a country. This period of growth was largely attributed to a boom in global commodity prices of oil - by then easily Venezuela's number one export commodity – the revenues of which, as earlier stated, were directed towards social programs nationally (Rosales 2016). At its peak, the international price of Venezuelan oil was at \$110,15 per barrel in 2012 (Angosto-Ferrández 2019). This period of growth, however, was abruptly interrupted in 2015 by (another) crash in commodity prices of oil (from the peak in 2012 to a mere \$40,73 per barrel in 2015 (ibid.2019) and which contributed heavily on a situation of a crisis developing within the country, not only in the economic sector (ibid. 2016), but in social and political spheres as well. The government expenditure to social programs as well as wages saw a large deterioration with oil income lowering and inflation increasing (ibid. 2019). Regardless of the fall in prices of 2015, oil exports continued to be at the absolute center of foreign currency earnings, constituting a 97% of that income in 2015 (ibid. 2019). The stagnation of many economic sectors and the economy in general, together with the inability to maintain social expenditure at the pre-crisis levels, led to a victory of the opposition parties in the 2015 parliamentary elections which had only happened once before (ibid. 2019). This historic moment differs greatly from the height of the oil revenue boom that characterized the first years of the Chavist era and thus reflects the changed political and economic context of the current AMO project's inauguration compared to this previous era.

With the price of oil plummeting and the country falling into a state of crisis, the government of president Nicolás Maduro has sought to find new opportunities to boost economic productivity and restore the ability of the government to redistribute wealth through social programs. These measures include, as one of the fundamental pillars of the diversification of the extractive industry and the national economy, the extraction of mineral resources from the rich reserves the nation's soil holds. However, before going further, it is important to explore the historical relationship between Venezuelan natural resources and foreign capital.

5.2. Foreign capital constituting the model

The extractive history of Venezuela has strong linkages to international capital, following the aforementioned logic of extractivist investments. However, this history has been a complex one that has seen the relation between the state and foreign companies change over time. Nevertheless,

one element has remained unchanged: foreign capital in Venezuela continues to maintain its fundamental position at the heart of natural resource exploitation strategies.

The Venezuelan oil industry saw its beginning and formation tightly connected with foreign oil companies to whom the still inexperienced Venezuelan national oil exploiting capacity offered the territory and the resources underneath it to be extracted (Darwich Osorio 2015). By the half of the 20th century, Venezuela had created a multitude of laws that established the first institutional changes on the protection of oil as a national asset, and issued regulations to not only harmonize the control over oil, that saw its importance growing increasingly, but also to allow for the state to have a stronger role in benefiting from the same resource (ibid. 2015). This meant a general tax, creating of refineries in Venezuela and ceasing to concede more oil exploitation rights to foreign companies (ibid. 2015). Finally, in 1976 this ever-growing regain of control over the industry by the Venezuelan state resulted in the direct managing of the said industry (Teran-Mantovani 2018). This led to the nationalization of oil and the state gaining direct control over the industry through the newly founded state owned company, the PDVSA, which fast became more autonomous and a strong actor in Venezuelan politics due to the role oil revenues had in the national economy (Rosales 2016). However, none of these nationalization steps broke the link between the oil industry and international companies, and in 1993, following the measures taken in the “*apertura petrolera*” – re-opening of the industry to foreign investment - the first nationalization project officially ended, bringing with it some very liberal economic policies (Rosales 2016). Furthermore, the ‘*apertura*’ allowed for more aggressive expansion of the extraction of oil by attracting foreign investments especially in the Orinoco river belt, to which the PDVSA did not have the resources on its own to expand (ibid. 2016). Foreign companies entered the Venezuelan oil fields again, albeit briefly before another nationalization process took place. This expansion is important as it established the Orinoco oil extraction area that, as will be seen, has influenced the creation of the AMO by establishing a precedent for the institutional and structural arrangements, as well as rhetorical power needed for the mining project.

Hugo Chávez’s election and the rise to power of the Chavists in 1999 meant a gradual reversal of the policies of the ‘*apertura*’ in the name of “full oil sovereignty” which was claimed to bring a more national, just and redistributive use of the oil revenues following a socialist message of the Chavists (Rosales 2016). The major part of the nationalization process was carried out between 2005 and 2008 when the old contracts of the international oil companies were canceled in the name of

“national interests” and replaced with joint-venture companies, established between the PDVSA and the interested international oil companies, in which the national entity would retain a 60 per cent of the shares while the international partners would have the remaining 40 per cent (PDVSA 2016). The joint ventures were subjected, therefore, to a larger ability of the state’s control and with it to larger financial control, mainly through higher and more concentrated taxation (Rosales 2016). The “*Orinoco Magna Reserva*”-project of the Orinoco oil belt was presented as the flagship project of the new oil nationalization through which the PDVSA presented Venezuela as possessing the largest crude oil reserves in the world (PDVSA 2016). The clear message of this policy was that natural resources had now been employed to the service of the Venezuelan people by redistribution to social programs. Foreign companies and capital stayed, though, in the form of the said joint-ventures. Rosales (2016) describes this pervasive importance of foreign capital as follows: “In order to achieve this goal [becoming a “world energy superpower”], it [Venezuelan government] recognized the need to attract foreign investments in the form of joint ventures. The importance of this shift during the Chavist-era is significant for the analysis in this thesis. Rosales (2018) presents Venezuela as having established a “hybrid” policy orientation, when it comes to foreign investments, during this time which means policies that opt for change “in the contractual arrangements [as in joint ventures] between the state and foreign oil companies” (ibid. 2018, 440) but do not shy away from foreign investments, as the system is still dependent on them. In fact, the Chávez-era nationalization, very different from strong nationalization debates of the 1970s, has focused more on “controlling the resources” with the government centralizing power over natural resources while, at the same time, welcoming investments (ibid. 2018).

After the second nationalization process of the oil industry, 45 joint-venture companies were created, with international oil company associates originating from various different countries including many European powers, the United States, China, Russia and Brazil among some of the more influential countries of origin (PDVSA 2016). Many of these international companies had their presence in Venezuela before the creation of joint-venture contracts and thus only renegotiated their corporative presence through these contracts, as confirmed by the PDSVA, and as can be seen from the date of foundation, that coincides with the years of nationalization (2005-2007), of many of these joint ventures (ibid. 2016). It is to be noted, however, that with Chávez in power, there has been a clear strengthening of non-Western alliances which led to a search for diversification of markets and the finding new investments (Rosales 2016). This new focus on non-Western alliances

has remained during the Maduro era and can be seen in the AMO project's potential investors and in the strong political positioning of promoting multipolarism and strong rhetorical opposition to the United States and the economic policies it is seen to represent (Rosales 2016).

As we have seen, the Venezuelan economy has long been built on the (short and medium term) revenue that oil extraction has provided. The liberal, free resource access-based, 'old' extractivist tendency has given way to a model of neo-extractivist development, in a process that was largely initiated after the popularity of Hugo Chavez' movement saw Chavez elected president of Venezuela. This section briefly sums up the historical context of Venezuela, connecting it to the theorization of developmentalist neo-extractivism presented before. In this section, the important take is to see how the Chavist government built a political model of the '21st century socialism' which I intend to link to the neo-extractivist model and present how the 21st century socialist project has been built with the support of developmentalist neo-extractivism. Another important factor studied here is the legitimization of the anterior neo-extractivist model based on the Petro-State. The following section introduces the AMO and how its inauguration during the post-Chavist era is strongly linked to the previous oil-dependent model of the Chavist era.

5.3. "New" Orinoco for mining to diversify and "save" the economy

In 2016 the Venezuelan government, led by president Nicolás Maduro, signed a decree that would open new territories in the Venezuelan Orinoco basin for resource extraction through mining activities, creating the 'National Strategic Development Zone of Orinoco mining belt' (*Zona de Desarrollo Estratégico Nacional Arco Minero del Orinoco*) (Gaceta Oficial 2016A). This territory holds reserves of gold, diamonds, bauxite, iron and coltan (Teran-Mantovani 2018), and covers much of the Orinoco river area along with areas in the center of the country covering a total of 111.843,70kms² (ibid. 2016). Not only is the area large by its absolute dimensions, but it is so also by relative dimensions of Venezuela¹⁹ for which the opening of this territory to mining activities has to be seen as a major change in the resource extraction business and as a threat for socio-ecological damage.

¹⁹ More than 12% of the national territory (Teran-Mantovani 2018)

Coinciding with the collapse of oil commodity prices of 2014-2015 and the damage it caused to a heavily oil commodity based economy of the country, the opening up of the vast territory for mining just a year after the start of the crisis cannot be isolated from the logic of the government searching for new opportunities to boost economic productivity and revenues. In fact, the Venezuelan president Maduro, in his speech during the act of the signing of the decree, emphasized that Venezuela needed to leave behind the oil “rentierism” of old and develop a new strategy for economic development (Appendix A). Therefore, the AMO case can be seen as a response by the government facing a crisis and hence forms part of the attempt to steer extractivist industries towards new sources of revenue to alleviate said crisis. The above-mentioned fall in oil commodity prices is part of the societal wide crisis Venezuela has been suffering from. In fact, this fall of oil prices had already led to a considerable decrease in social spending and living standards for a large part of the population (Angosto-Ferrández 2019). Rosales (2016) confirms that economic problems, closely related to resource extraction, have been increasingly observable. Despite the speech of Nicolás Maduro that claimed a new form of natural resource exploitation, and in order to break away from the old model of oil extraction, there are scholars (for example Teran-Mantovani 2018, Rosales 2017) who see the move to mineral exploitation as a new face of extractivism and rentierism. This ‘reaction’ of the government forms an important element in the later analysis of the case.

The government presented its new focus on the potential of the mining industry especially through the AMO project and during the same year of its opening the government created a new ministry, the Ministry for the Development of Ecological Mining²⁰, to be in charge of the industry, separating it from the Ministry of Petroleum under whose authority mining policy previously belonged (Gaceta Oficial 2016B). Furthermore, during the same time period, the mining sector was set up as one of the “economic motors”²¹ through which Venezuela is to reform its economy (see appendix D). The importance of the new mining reforms is not to be taken lightly, as before, very little emphasis had been put on the mining industry in the country before, with often informal groups leading the activities – a situation that continues to this day in many areas of the Orinoco region (Valladares et al. 2018).

²⁰ *El Ministerio del Poder Popular para Desarrollo Minero Ecológico*. Literally, the “Ministry of popular power for the development of ecological mining”. The Venezuelan ministries are all characterized as “*Ministerio del Poder Popular*”.

²¹ Different sectors that have the uniform goal of diversifying the economy are referred to as *engines (motor)*. This characterization of the sectors appears often in the speech (appendix A) and new articles (appendix B).

The new emphasis on the mining sector does not necessarily mean that the historically small contributions of the mining sector to the GDP or to the distribution of wealth (Valladares et al. 2018) can immediately be seen to increase after the 2016 AMO-project – what I want to state with these new reforms is the attention and potential of the intensifying of extractive ventures in the AMO area that might lead to further escalation of socio-ecological problems and violence related to the mining activities that already exist. Therefore, the actions the government has taken indicate a large scale and intensive push towards new resource fronts which has, since its inauguration, been criticized by scholars, indigenous groups and other civil society movements as causing great socio-ecological problems that characterize large scale extractivist projects (Teran 2016). Among these problems we find the direct contamination and degradation of the Orinoco Delta ecosystem with important water sources for the country, the direct and indirect threat to the livelihoods and culture of the many indigenous people who inhabit the area, which is now facing massive extractivist expansion without any prior viable ecological assessment or consultations with the people of the area (Teran 2016).

Furthermore, the new expansion of extractivist activity, promoted by the AMO, has the potential to greatly increase violence and conflicts that have been increasing heavily already before the AMO (Teran-Mantovani 2018). The increased demand for mining, and especially gold and its smuggling, has increased illegal mining and criminal activity of criminal and paramilitary groups, on one side, and the increased militarization of the same areas - including military members working with illegal mining actors - on the other side, have concentrated the violence and conflicts ever more to the AMO area and thus to regions inhabited by indigenous people (Teran-Mantovani 2018). The capacity and willingness of the government, even with the new emphasis on the AMO, to effectively bring this process to a halt has been questioned (Ebus 2017). The ecological and social damage these megaprojects cause and the activism and mobilizations against them cannot be ignored when speaking of these extractivist ventures. The focus of the thesis is on the discourse of the government and it is important to keep this socio-ecological damage in mind when we see the discourse of the Venezuelan government.

To organize the new large scale extractivist AMO project, the government has claimed to follow the structure of the previously introduced oil industry, especially the Orinoco Oil Belt, including the basis for the legislation on resource control and investments as well as providing

general context for establishing a large-scale resource extraction area²². Following the structure of the oil industry in the country, the structure of economic entities operating in the mining belt are legally constituted to be joint-ventures in which the state has the 55% of the shares and profits (Angosto-Ferrández 2019). However, Angosto-Ferrández (2019) states that the AMO project does indeed enable more operational freedom to international private entities and -capital than the neighboring oil project because of the very different contexts that were present at the launch of the projects – respectively, one was launched during a both political and economic crisis of the very system that initiated the older nationalization projects and the other more than a decade before with conditions for nationalization under the government’s plans being much easier both politically and economically. According to Teran (2016), the changes in the contracts do in fact cede more liberties to the international companies and offer them more flexibility in their operations which has effectively weakened the actual policies of “energetic nationalism”, which has been an important characteristic in the Bolivarian politics, and given transnational companies resources to have an increasingly important role in Venezuelan national political, economic and territorial spheres. One example of this are the decrees issued, first in the oil sector and then in the AMO, about the “Strategic National Development Zones” and “Special Economic Zones” that give increased liberties to international companies, including customs incentives, flexibility for labor conditions and tax exemptions (Teran Mantovani 2017), effectively raising questions about territorial sovereignty and the power given to TNCs in the Venezuelan national territory.

As mentioned above, the mining industry has been proclaimed by government actors as the sector that will help Venezuela shake off its dependency on oil and, to this end, the government has been looking for international investors to the zone (Rosales 2017), as already seen from the opening ceremony of the AMO where representatives of different mining and hydrocarbon companies were shown to be strongly present (Appendix A). Interestingly, doubts over the legal base for the investments has deterred investors (ibid. 2017) and the ongoing instability of the country in the economic and political levels has to be considered when looking into the difficulties in acquiring investors and large-scale investments. This tendency, paired with tensions between

²² For example in president Maduro’s speech (Appendix A), he draws similarities between the development of the two industries.

Venezuela and some actors in Latin America and the Global North²³, has the potential to steer Venezuela to look for potential investors from countries that can express more support to the Maduro led "socialism of the 21st century" or express less concern for and demand fewer conditions on the economic and political decisions made by the government in charge. In this context, we have seen the emergence of Russian and Chinese companies partnering up with Venezuelan state owned companies to exploit the resources that the Venezuelan territory has to offer, and completely new partnerships being made, as is the case of Turco-Venezuelan increased cooperation²⁴.

All of these phenomena are linked together in the complex field of discursivity, where a governmental discourse emphasizes the strength of the new mining industry as the new developmental 'motor', strongly insisting on the benefits of extractivist activity for the country and its people, while in the meantime more and more concessions are given to the operations of international mining corporations in the country.

5.4. From context to discourse

The oil industry has clearly been a fundamental part of Venezuelan economy during decades and had played an important role in building the national imaginary and politics. International companies have held their presence in the country through the various cycles of nationalization and privatization and keep doing so through the new joint ventures that, according to the Venezuelan state representatives and official rhetoric, is a policy that guarantees sovereignty over oil resources and its revenue as well as enables this revenue to be redistributed to guarantee the well-being of the people of the country.

At the time of writing, the country is experiencing a major crisis due to the collapse of the prices of the very substance that has provided for much of the revenue that maintained the social programs operational. The processes and mechanisms introduced in this chapter raise some important questions about the Venezuelan oil based economic model that is facing unprecedented criticism and opposition. The content of this chapter has to be seen through the notion of neo-

²³ Venezuela has expressed openly and quite strongly its anti-imperialistic and anti-USA opposition and critique (Rosales 2016) and the USA from its part has had very strong critique towards the Maduro regime as well as has imposed sanctions.

²⁴ A rather sudden strengthening of Turco-Venezuelan relations can be seen to have started in 2016 and since then Venezuela has become a more important trade partner for Turkey in the mining sector as well, especially through exporting gold to Turkey (Karel 2019).

extractivism introduced in the previous chapter and through the long-established developmental model based on these resources. To summarize this conversation, the intake of this chapter for the analysis to follow can be iterated with four considerations:

- 1) The long history of oil that the Venezuelan state established as almost the sole resource bringing wealth to the country.
- 2) Foreign investments have been present from the outset and, even though the institutional relations to them have changed, they continue to form a fundamental component of the extractivist model.
- 3) The Bolivarian Revolution brought in a new model of development focuses on redistributing oil-derived wealth to social programs and criticizing the conventional development and economic world order, while continuing to rely on oil revenues as sole the source of wealth for the model.
- 4) The AMO is an integral part of this process and a response to a crisis in oil revenues falling and must, thus, be studied accordingly. This has implications for understanding the discursive elements of mining ventures as forming a larger historical narrative of the Bolivarian revolution and natural resource policy.

The introduction of new mining ventures is still at its initial stages, however, and the exploitation of oil is not going anywhere: the Orinoco Oil Belt contains vast reserves of oil and historically and currently has attracted large foreign investments and continues to be a vital part of international commercial negotiations and development strategy of the country (Teran-Mantovani 2018). Therefore, what is now being constructed in Venezuela is a process that I characterize as a double focus on extractivism where oil plays a historically important role and mining is being promoted as a newcomer that the government still needs establish as a viable economic alternative to oil rentierism and increase its attractiveness to international capital in the forms of investments. This double focus is a completely new strategy that threatens to repeat the same pattern of the oil industry's environmentally destructive, rentierist model of production and raises challenges to the government in being able to offer a legitimate reasoning behind this new focus.

This chapter has provided us with the history and current situation of the Venezuelan extractivist ventures, focusing on the context in which the AMO, and the new focus on mining, began appearing in the governmental discourse in unprecedented vigor. The four considerations that I present above help to guide us through that context and, thus, provide a framework in which the CDA of the following chapter is analyzed.

6. Analysis and discussion

This chapter is dedicated to the textual material introduced earlier. I introduce how I applied Fairclough's approach to the texts, conducted a critical discourse analysis based on the approach and consequently present the key findings. This chapter consists of a more detailed presentation of the texts, including the categorization, context and other relevant factors of the texts and the processes behind them that need to be accounted for before the analysis itself. Following this first stage, I present the actual CDA conducted in detail, using the three-pronged approach. The subchapter is divided in two parts to present the two important larger discursive phenomena that arose from the analysis of the texts: the legitimization of the new mining ventures and more subtle, yet constant, involvement of international capital, mostly through investors, in discourse. Finally, the last part of this chapter ties the two phenomena together, presents the final analysis and connects it to a larger context about new extractivist ventures and their links to foreign capital.

6.1. Representations of mining

The first aspect to look at in order to answer the questions about governmental discourse forming around new natural resource exploitation projects and foreign capital, presented at the beginning of the study is, how the new mining ventures are legitimized in governmental discourse. This aspect is a complex and wide one, and in this study, it is investigated using the aforementioned material and the CDA. To approach legitimization, I explored and analyzed the material through some key features that included focusing on how mining is presented in the material. To understand how governmental actors legitimize and justify the new AMO-project, I have decided to look into the discursive practices of the said actors to find how they create the legitimizing elements in the discourse about mining. Therefore, the representations of mining ventures take the center stage here to discover these elements in the discourse itself, followed by an analysis of the discursive

findings. The analysis reveals a few aspects that together contribute to the building of discourses that can have a legitimizing effect towards the mining industry, which in turn help to understand the role of foreign capital in the discourse as well as the underlying ontological positions that I address later through developmentalism and natural resource nationalism. These findings are divided in three categories which I classify under the following titles (following the findings in the analysis): i) mining as modernization and development ii) governmental mining as an answer to political criticism, and iii) mining as supporting a wider nationalist project.

i) Mining as modernization and development

The first category consists of presenting mining as a dynamic promotor of development through an image of the government-led mining industry as representing an ideal 'modern'. Not only does this category mean that mining is shown as a means to achieve economic growth but it also creates an image of mining industry as a modern and dynamic means to achieve overall improvements in all sectors and aspects of society – on one side, economical, but on the other side, social as well. Furthermore, it emphasizes the role of the government creating a clear gap between its mining ventures and other actors in mining. This first category is characterized by developmentalist and positivist elements about the capacity of technological advancement in achieving an ideal type of 'development'. All of this creates a discourse where governmental mining activities are appreciated because they represent this normative idea of development that other actors do not – in the discourse the governmental mining ventures become a representation of an ideal 'modern'.

a) 'Dynamic' and highly technological mining

Firstly, governmental-led mining projects, with the AMO as representative of this, are presented as technologically advanced and highly technical. I found this aspect to be a constant characterization of the mining industry throughout the material, especially when reflecting the mining industry's traditional problems with environmental destruction. The material referred to mining often with phrases such as "ecologically sustainable", "ecological" and "clean". This "ecological mining" is represented as possible because of "new technologies" and that the national government possesses the tools for their implementation. Furthermore, dependency on technological advancement is characterized through contrasting it with the known petroleum industry and its problems. To further

emphasize the importance of technology in mining, these advancements are often linked to the idea that technology furthers “development”, which is seen as a positive concept.

Second, I found out that the mining industry itself as well as governmental actors, led by the Venezuelan Ministry for Ecological Mining, are attributed a characteristic over all others throughout the material. This characteristic I call ‘dynamism’, meaning that the industry is described as a highly efficient, flexible and active ‘promotor of development’ in the country. Dynamism supports the characterization of mining as technologically advanced by showing that specifically these types of mining ventures function because ‘dynamism’ not only means those aforementioned aspects but is also understood as normatively positive in the text. The central term of the new mining industry that the government uses uniformly is “*engine*²⁵” which captions the idea of dynamism and modernization very well. The use of this term, a new one that emerges ever more often with the introduction of the AMO and the “integral economic development” plans of the government, is wide spread across the publications of the government and often referred to by governmental actors who are quoted in these documents. It is used, not only as a term itself to refer to the AMO project and the emerging sector but is also often accompanied by other discursive means that render mining and the “engine” more dynamic. This includes uses where mining is referred to as the “fundamental engine” or a “productive engine” and where this “engine” is told to be ‘developing’ the entirety of the new national economic goals of the country. Other words with significant similar influence are often used with mining. These include “productive” as an adjective when referring to mining and mining related economic success and verbs that indicate change towards, and the sectors ability to convert into a new “productive model” and into an important source for financing other sectors.

Furthermore, the mining economic motor is presented to be able to generate funds for social policy sectors and directly investing into social project funds. This role of the income from the mining sector towards social projects is emphasized, which contributes to showing mining (and not only governmental actors in mining but also mining as an activity itself) as socially and ecologically aware and with capacity to fast be able to confront changes and contribute to the national economy and society as a whole. This is achieved by representing this mining activity through the high capacity it has to be exploited for economic gains through being responsive to change, technological

²⁵ AMO and the emerging mining sector are listed as the eight of the (14) engines for economic development that President Maduro introduced in the activation speech of the AMO (appendix A).

rendering and “the idea of modernity”. This entails a presentation of mining as forming part of an “integral” economic model that takes many sectors into account for the “integral development” of the country. Governmental actors describe this process as ‘integral’, where “integral” is one of the National Plan’s standard terms and is mentioned in the documents and speech constantly and refer to being dependent on technological changes and ‘development’. At the heart of all of the above lies the trust in economy, the economism of developmentalist thought, which we can see from the idea that a highly technological sector can bring revenue to the state which will benefit the nation and contribute to the overall ‘development’ of other (economic) sectors.

b) Antagonisms to modernity

Additionally, to strengthen the discursive power of the “modernity-based discourse”, some antagonistic elements can be seen which follow the logic of othering and defining the discourse through exclusion, following Chantal and Mouffe. The two antagonisms identified focus around the creation of two very distinct others that both represent ‘underdevelopment’ in different ways and, thus fortify the mandate of the national mining industry in mining activities.

The first of the two is the representation of an ‘other’ of small-scale mining and miners²⁶ that are said to practice mining illegally and in harmful ways. This antagonism centers around the idea that small-scale miners that are conducting illegal and out of the norm mining activities are doing so in ‘traditional’ ways and using outdated technology which are represented as unsustainable and directly damaging to the surrounding environment, especially through the use of mercury in mining, often in areas under governmental conservation. This image of small-scale miners is then heavily contrasted with the capacity of the national mining ventures where the national mining industry is shown to possess these skills and seen to be able to “educate” others in socially and ecologically conscious mining, in multiple occasions proposing to **hand out** these “technologies for the environment” to the small-scale miners for making their industries part of the “integral” national economic model as well. The vice-president of Venezuela is reported calling the effects of “illegal mining” an “ecological disaster” (Appendix B.12) and the ecological problems in mining areas as the fault of the “interests of smugglers”. The juxtapositions over the ecologically

²⁶ “La pequeña minería” (minería referring to the act of mining, not to any specific actors) is the original term used, often in parallel with “pequeños mineros” or “mineros artesanales” (small-scale miners/artisanal miners).

damaging “illegal mining” and the benefits of the legal, technologically superior, “ecological mining” are recurrent in the communications. The material implies that when given these tools of the government, the small-scale miners become the protagonists of the AMO project instead of being the uncontrolled, illegal and ‘underdeveloped’ other that fails to follow these tools and programs.

The other antagonism that is created is in fact the first of few ways in which foreign influence appears in the discourse. This second discursive element of ‘othering’ recognizes international involvement as harmful, following the earlier policy-orientation of Venezuelan policies of nationalizing natural resources. Even though this antagonism is less prevalent in the material than the first one and is done in a subtler way, it still achieves a similar effect in strengthening the discourse. Here, international mentions are scarce but when they are made they mostly appear in news articles that focus on international meetings or bilateral agreements, whereas small-scale mining and the ecological aspect are brought up more consistently even throughout articles that don’t specifically focus on them. The main discursive action is to imply that foreign involvement in resource extraction leads to uncontrolled exploitation of Venezuela’s natural resources. What gives this argument power, however, is that it is always joined by a statement that affirms the ability of the government, through a set of “very specific and strict” laws²⁷, to control this exploitation to the benefit of all parties in a “win-win” situation. The main take here is twofold. Firstly, small-scale mining is seen as ‘underdeveloped’ directly, and thus could be considered blocking ‘development’ efforts promoted by governmental actors. And secondly, foreign involvement is seen to ‘block development’ through its uncontrolled and erratic form of exploitation, that the government can keep in check to include foreign capital in the ‘modern’ and controlled form of national exploitation that it is practicing and promoting, eventually leading to economically benefit both the state and the TNCs involved. Thus, regardless of the very different contexts of the former and the latter, the governmentally promoted mining ventures are offered as a solution to both problems.

ii) Governmental mining ventures as an answer to political criticism

The second category consists of the discursive elements that address many of the issues that have been attributed to large scale mining. Rather than starting from a critical point of view about the destructive potential of mining ventures, it brings in the center of the discourse the way in which

²⁷ Only direct mention, in all the material, to any norms or laws is the ‘joint-venture’ legislation that we have seen in earlier chapters of the thesis.

the government-led mining ventures actually imply positive change in all these traditionally negatively associated issues. This category becomes clearer through examples but the main element here is to “flip the discourse” by emphasizing the way the AMO can positively impact ecological, economic and social questions which would often be seen to suffer due to similar mining ventures. In part, this second category complements the first by bringing another emphasis on the way discourse is created. In this section, the social, ecological and economic questions are treated and introduced separately for clarity and for the fact that the discourse itself separates these core areas clearly from each other when they are being spoken about. The issues that governmental mining is presented to “fix” are the notion of extractivist activities as a) *ecologically destructive*, b) *socially damaging*, especially in local contexts, and c) *economically unsustainable*. Ironically, these categories fit well with the general criticism of extractivism that I presented when introducing extractivism and the criticism directed towards the AMO.

a) Ecologically destructive mining

The first series of issues are ecologically related. The choice for the ecological questions as the first ones comes as no surprise when analyzing the material as it is noticeable how frequent references towards the potential of the AMO has towards ecological sustainability and nature preservation efforts. Following the discussion above about mining ventures representing a normatively superior ‘modern’, we see how the discourse characterizes the national mining industry as highly technological, which in turn is seen to have a positive impact on the environment. In fact, the ecological sphere seems to be one of the dominant emphases of the discourse which I discovered after finding out that the majority of ministerial publications and Maduro’s speech (Appendix A) mention the novel sustainability capacity of the new mining industry. Furthermore, a significant number of the publications (Appendix B) do have ecological issues as the main theme, but what is more interesting is that the majority of all the publications, in some way, refer to the ecological nature of the mining industry. In fact, the ecologically-oriented approach in the discourse shares much similarity with the ‘Green Economy’ or ‘sustainable development’ thinking where earlier unsustainable policies are thought to be fixable through moderate policy interventions, modern

technology and belief in market mechanisms (Kothari et al. 2014) ²⁸. In the case of Venezuelan governmental discourse, especially the insistence on the link between modern technology and ecological production methods, can be observed.

Additionally, words and phrases such as (sustainable, clean gold, ecological mining, ecologically produced...) are used and contrasted with ecologically more damaging activities; which the above-mentioned small-scale miners and illegal mining activity, especially, represent; and with further impactful normative phrases and news-stories, both of which the frequently cited story of the country's first "clean (ecologically sustainable) gold bars" being produced by small-scale miners under supervision of governmental actors, represents.

Furthermore, it is to be noted that the name of the ministry in charge of the mining industry in Venezuela, namely the 'Ministry of popular power for the development of ecological mining', , was formed with the foundation of the AMO project and forms part of the discourse as well. The aforementioned ministry is one of the few ministries that includes the specific mention "ecological" in its name²⁹, and this name in its entirety is more often than not used in the material. The impact it has is not to be underestimated – it strengthens the claim of the governmental actors and recreates the discourse with an image of ecologically conscious actors. The ministry holds a strong position of power and authority by the mere merit of representing an established governmental institution. Representing one of the sectors that has seen much critique about its contribution to ecological crises, this choice in name does form a part of the making of discourse over governmental mining ventures. The ecological insistence and its ties to the new AMO project become even more evident considering that the ministry was indeed created in 2016 when the AMO project launched and has henceforth been the governmental body associated with the project.

b) Socially damaging mining

The next issue concerns the destructive potential of mining in local contexts in terms of community, social issues and exclusion at the offset of an intrusive mining industry, especially in indigenous communities, but in other local communities of the region as well. As we have seen in the criticism

²⁸ For example, Kothari et al. (2014) offer a critique towards these views by claiming that they are inadequate in dealing with the many socio-environmental problems caused by earlier policies of 'development' due to them being too closely embedded in the idea of constant economic growth and the neoliberal system.

²⁹ In fact, out of more than thirty ministries of the country, only the mining sector's name, besides the specific ministry dedicated to "Ecosocialism", carries the explicit message of being "ecological". (Gaceta Oficial 2018)

to AMO, local people do suffer from the problems of extractivism the most. This destructive potential in the local communities sees a 'flip' in the discourse and instead communal social issues are spoken in a positive light through the potential of mining as a unifying and socially contributive force.

First of all, mining appears as an inclusive and participative activity that considers the entire local communities that are affected by the introduction of mining activities in their vicinity, including representations that seem to link mining as even binding the community tighter together. There are several different ways that the discourse perpetuates this image. Firstly, the many pieces of governmental communications that focus on reporting the progress of the mining projects by focusing on panel meetings (*"mesas de trabajo"*), meetings between governmental actors from the ministry, region and the MINERVEN-state owned mining company, and communities of small-scale miners, give an image of participative decision-making over mining policies. Governmental publications mention them often when speaking of regional mining plans and communities and they are characterized as successful, key parts of the governmental plans on how to develop the AMO. Further details of these panel meetings are not clarified, though, leaving out any details of who these representatives of the small-scale communities are or whether they indeed are representative of all the communities of the regions concerned. The inclusion of indigenous people, in the form of indigenous small-scale miners, is mentioned as well, but only shortly when mentioning the panel meetings that are being held with indigenous communities. In these occasions it is made clear, briefly and concisely, that indigenous people are active participants in deciding for what is seen best for the region and the country, giving the understanding that all indigenous people of Venezuela, without distinction, support and form a part of the governmental mining plans. These mentions include a statement that indigenous (note no specification of a specific community) peoples *"...recognized the job that the government is doing for their well-being..."* (Appendix B.5), which is affirmed by the governmental actors by informing that *"mining... ...is the only engine that can give us, on the short-term, national riches to convert in life, education, healthcare, housing, in social infrastructure in protection of parks, in protection of indigenous people"* (Appendix B.34), and that *"indigenous peoples are collaborators in the national development"* when it comes to mining (Appendix B.12).

These few mentions aside, the discourse focuses on speaking only of communities and people in general terms, making clear that everyone is considered to be part of the plans and the

supposed "mining communities" that are shown to represent the "small-scale miners". These communities (as regulated, governmentally controlled) are represented as the driving source of the Orinoco Mining Arch and their contributions and successes are emphasized while large scale mining and large joint-venture mining companies are never mentioned in detail apart from news about received investments and technological exchange, or as a force to keep in check alongside with small-scale miners who do not follow governmental plans, as seen above. An ambiguous concept of the "pueblo minero", i.e. the "mining communities", is shown to be the driving force of the national economy and the potential of the people to better their lives with mining activities and the lives of all the people. These concepts seem to be used to refer to any communities that practice mining activities, mixing different indigenous people with other communities, creating an idea of a united people without an understanding of different local contexts.

Examples of ways the material refers to small-scale miners:	
<i>"It's the organization of the people to produce for the people, but economically productive y nowadays ecologically sustainable."</i>	(Appendix B.12)
<i>"Small-scale mining, called so for its dimensions and not for its capabilities."</i>	(Appendix B.38)
<i>"The potential that we have in small-scale mining could be that it is greater than that which we call large-scale mining, if we organize our miners well, [...], if we give them technical support, [...], if we give them technology."</i>	(Appendix B. 38)

Apart from the togetherness and community creating elements of the discourse, the other manner in which these issues are treated focuses on presenting mining activities and governmental actors related to mining as exponents of social projects in communities. Here, the focus is at the local level, instead of the general funding seen in the first category, and the material shows how the discourse focuses on achievements and social projects on that level, and how the wealth generated by mining activities will be directed towards investments in projects for the people. In the material, several communications directly focus on presenting successful social projects where the ministry for ecological mining has been backing them as a "patron". These projects are representations of local level issues, such as building a school, or grand projects of restoring buildings and building

more apartments in communities. The works have little connection to mining activities themselves apart from the indication that the ministry of mining has been the patron of the projects. This way of presenting mining actors in projects, however, not only strengthens the idea that governmental mining actors are present at the local level but also implies that their presence has positive impacts on the community in all aspects of social life outside of the mere economic activity of mining itself. In fact, in one occasion, the specific article (appendix B.13) describes such a project in a part of Caracas as follows: *"These actions and their results constitute a show of the presence of the Bolivarian Government and of the president Nicolás Maduro, for the attention of the Venezuelan people"*.

c) Economically unsustainable mining

The third issue relates to the questions of natural resource dependency and related critiques, as well as to the 'rentierist' economic model, both of which indicate a reliance on a limited number of (often raw) natural resources to maintain the economic structure of the country. We saw this earlier in the criticism of the Venezuelan mining sector and in the previous policies of the country when regarding the dominant oil sector. In this last series of questions, the focus of the discourse is to present the new mining industry as a contrary force to the 'traditional' way in which natural resources have been exploited in natural resource dependent economies.

Interestingly, the focus of the discourse is to contrast the AMO to the old national petroleum industry and policies by acknowledging the problems of the "rentierist" petroleum industry and declaring that the mining industry will not commit the same errors. When petroleum is spoken of in the data, it is to refer to a natural resource dependent model and is treated as a normatively worse model than what the AMO currently represents³⁰. In fact, the data characterizes the emerging mining sector as one of the solutions to *"diversify the economy"* and to *"get over the rentierist*

³⁰ It is important to note that there is a linkage between the mining sector and the national development that underlies the data: that the developing of the AMO is fundamental for the "Mining Engine" which, in turn, is representative of the "Bolivarian Economic Agenda". This link is important to know because across all the data, these three (AMO, the whole mining sector and the national level economic development plans) are often not specified or are given the same attributes and thus treated as being without much independence from one another when related to the element of "rentierist economy" where the AMO is understood to be a representation of the whole new national economy.

model”, two phrases that appear often in the data, alongside with similar juxtapositions between the ‘old’ and the ‘new’ models of economic development – for example, president Maduro presents AMO as a “*source of wealth that diversifies the [state’s] income and substitutes oil [as the only source of that income]*”(Appendix A). This is insisted throughout the material, reminding that the new mining ventures are done in a way that will not lead to resource dependency. While the oil-dependent economic model is a subject of criticism in the data when speaking of this new project of diversifying the economy, the “rentierist model” is offered as something taken for granted, and as an a priori alternative that lacks any concrete political or economic context. Thus, the “rentierist model” is understood throughout the discourse as an undesirable economic model that is referenced clearly as a common part of natural resource dependent economies, including Venezuela, but without any admission of having existed under previous Chavist natural resource policies that are now being reformed.

iii) Mining as supporting a wider nationalist project

The last category focuses on how mining is presented as a national project with deep historical roots. This series of discursive elements consists of larger phenomena and intertextual elements that present mining as a part of Venezuelan national identity and as a common means in achieving national goals that are presented as representing the will of all Venezuelans. I identified this process mostly as *creating imaginaries* about mining which consist of bringing up historical processes of nationalistic nature.

The starting point of this representation of mining is more complex than in the previous two representations as discovering it was based much more on elements that do not exist directly in the material but rather give strength to the wordings and phrases used: the discursive power that intertextuality, imaginaries and many other elements give the discourse. Once more, the category overlaps with the others but merits its own categorization due to the specific characteristic as ‘imaginary creating, and imaginary perpetuating’. Two imaginary-creating elements are the focal point of this category which I introduce separately for clearer understanding of the elements. However, they both contribute to giving the larger discourse of mining the similar positive imaginary that characterizes the material studied here. The two categories are as follows: i) mining as a national/nationalistic project which is connected to ii) an image of mining as a long historical livelihood of many Venezuelan communities.

In this representation, mining appears as part of a continuous historical-national project of Venezuela, following the principles of the Bolivarian 21st century socialist ideology. Firstly, two historical links are made – one sees mining as part of a continuous national project of economic development that follows in the footsteps of the Bolivarian Revolution, started by Hugo Chávez. The second one emphasizes the long tradition of mining activity by small-scale miners. These both are then tied together by elements that emphasize unity and national identity. I start from the latter to then connect it to the larger context of the former.

Small-scale miners, as we have seen, are referred to throughout the data as the most appreciated actors in mining and this premise is applicable to this third representation as well. However, here the emphasis is on the historicity of their activities and there are references in the data to this tradition of how communities, by mining, are practicing their “ancestral” activities, or how they have much to share in terms of knowledge of centuries in mining practices. There is also the earlier seen contrast between “illegal” mining, or the ‘non-technological’ small-scale mining that works as an antagonism to the ‘modern’ state ventures but even through these mentions, the historicity of mining activities is recognized and the acknowledgment of small-scale miners’ long traditions in mining activities is appreciated even if their current methods of practice are not.

The other historical angle, mining as a continuation of a larger national project, is evident in the data across a myriad of occasions. The material contains constant mentions of the “legacy” of Hugo Chávez. This is done by referring to the AMO as a project that was designed by Hugo Chávez and then executed according to that design by the president Maduro. The data affirms an underlining project, started by Hugo Chávez in the “Bolivarian Socialist Revolution”, and through these recurring references to him, keeps making the case that AMO indeed forms an integral part of these plans. This representation of a national project of mining is then further emphasized by the community creating ways we saw earlier in the second representations and they are emphasized by using generalizing terms that create a ‘universal Venezuelan people’ – this includes references to the “worker” as a general term when speaking of the mining sector’s goals, communities, and who the mining ventures are meant to benefit. Furthermore, use of “Patria”, “Bolivarian Government”, “Revolutionary Government” and “Bolivarian State”, are normatively strong in meaning and are referred to mean an ambiguous ‘national unity’ without difference in the meaning between these words. Moreover, the national project is strengthened with the creation of antagonisms between

this process and both international actors, threatening the sovereignty of Venezuela's resources and the Venezuelan opposition, which is hinted to be against this project in dishonest ways, wanting the economy to collapse. Meanwhile, President Maduro is presented as a defender of the Bolivarian Revolutionist state from these attacks.

The third representation, then, can be summarized as being a representation of the governmental mining ventures as a continuation of a national project that takes strength from the historical and ideological strength of the Chavez era reforms. The project is a national one where all the sectors are brought together:

"We are the popular power, here we come to take this step, with this victory, working hand in hand with the ministry, the national and regional governments and with all the facilities giving us permanent help" (Appendix B.7)

The national project binds together the claim of mining as a historical profession and livelihood of many communities and the AMO, which is offered to guarantee the rights of these mining communities. Lastly, the president, Nicolás Maduro, is ultimately seen as the leader of this process and of the well-being of the people, and he seen as personally in charge of even the mining ventures of the nation. The connection between all levels of the country and the underlying elevation of the presidential role in mining is seen in the data through a wide-spread news story that is often mentioned in the data, where 'small-scale' miners are described as personally handing out president Maduro the first gold bars produced without the use of mercury (referred to as "clean gold"), and followed by commentary about the significance of this for the environment and the national 'development' (Appendix B.8 & B.9).

6.2. Foreign capital in the discourse

In the previous sections I have identified three representations of the governmental mining ventures that the data shows. This has been an effort to understand which aspects and elements are present and used in the discourse about the new AMO project and the mining sector. I chose to approach the mining ventures through the said 'representations' because together they reveal the elements that are used in this discourse to describe these new ventures and, due to the nature of the representations showing mining as something to be promoted. Consequently, if international

involvement is mostly absent in these representations, it must mean that there is a problem with how foreign capital fits with the other elements of the discourse when it comes to creating a normatively positive image of mining ventures in the discourse. Indeed, after having identified the diverse representations of mining in the data, we can see that the role of foreign capital is small, yet some elements related to international involvement are used. In the following section, I summarize what we have already learned of the phenomenon from its role in the representations of mining and will follow with a brief summary of the other ways foreign capital is present in the data in order to understand the full extent and role it has in the whole discourse.

First of all, we have seen that the role of foreign capital in the creation of the three representations is small, yet complicated. Foreign capital is presented as a threat to the sovereignty of the country because of the fear of the loss of control over natural resources and land in which these resources are extracted in. Furthermore, the uncontrolled expansion of transnational mining companies is presented as a problem for the national Venezuelan project because it is perceived as a potentially destructive force for the economy and for its socio-ecological impact. In both of these cases, however, governmental actions towards mining are contrasted with the presented 'uncontrollability' and 'destructiveness' of foreign capital by presenting that laws and policies enacted by the Venezuelan government can control these foreign forces in a way that their 'controlled' involvement will bring benefits to the country. Besides the view of foreign capital as being a threat that can be contained and contrasted to highlight the achievements of governmental mining ventures, the other present aspect of it in the representations is the idea of supporting governmental actors in 'developing' the mining sector to be as technologically 'advanced' as possible. This means showing the Venezuelan government as an equal partner of transnational companies and other nations in negotiations about mining investments that are said to focus on "technological exchange". As we have seen, references to foreign capital in these occasions support the representations of governmental mining and are thus part of how mining is presented rather than forming part of any separate grand discourse of foreign capital.

Whereas the majority of all the data analyzed conforms with the idea of the 'three representations of mining' presented above, there is, however, a stark contrast with the publications that have their main focus on foreign capital. Six³¹ news articles of the ministerial

³¹ The other publications about foreign investment (appendix C), follow the same discursive tendencies as the six (appendix B.6, B.7, B.20, B.26, B.27, B33) that form part of the main data timeline and no significant discursive changes are detectable.

communications, that constitute the second part of the material for the analysis³², and they do differ in tone from the rest of the data. They do still mention the Venezuelan sovereignty and the environmental considerations in the abovementioned ways that support the representations. However, they raise considerations and topics that are not mentioned in any other parts of the data, forming a discussion about foreign involvement, unique to this particular fragment of the data which otherwise is very coherent³³ in its representations of mining ventures. In this exception of the data, foreign capital is presented as mostly investment-related ways that have the effect of showing the attractiveness of the AMO for foreign companies. It is described that foreign involvement means “strategic alliances”, and “technological exchange”. However, the most evident feature is the insistence that Venezuela is a good place for investing and for forming these “strategic alliances”. The potential of the AMO is presented, with a list of resources the area contains, especially focusing on gold and diamond reserves, emphasizing the size of them and focusing on processes that make it easier for Venezuela to export these resources, and these publications repeatedly mention how Venezuela is welcoming towards foreign investments. Furthermore, these exception-creating publications center around the negotiations and meetings the Venezuelan government has had with foreign companies and representatives of the government of the nations these companies originate from, with regard to preparations for exploration of the mineral resources in the AMO area, as well as participation of governmental actors in mining conventions, with the focus on an exchange of experiences and technology-sharing between state actors and foreign companies.

6.3. Discourse and resource nationalism

Finally, we come to the questions that were established at the beginning of this thesis. The representations of mining that I proposed in the previous section are but a tool for the CDA. They serve to categorize observations, discursive moments and the articulation practices that lead to them, and as follows, I present the analysis and findings, using the abovementioned representations and other tools of the CDA presented previously.

³² Page 24 indicates the material of the analysis.

³³ ‘Coherent’ in that it repeats the same discursive elements and refers to the same topics throughout the data. For example, a publication about the achievements of small-scale mining does not fail to mention ecological impacts, the role of all levels of government and the technological advances of the government. These same aspects are present in the publications about foreign investments as well, yet foreign investments, as presented in their own publications, are not part of any other publication of a different topic.

Natural resource nationalism with a new twist

The representations that we see in the discourse follow some common lines through which it is possible to analyze what kind of a discourse the governmental actors follow when speaking of mining ventures. We see that these representations all have elements that emphasize the capacities of the state in providing 'development' and claiming to represent a wide range of communities, with different social contexts and needs, that are bound together in the idea of the 'Bolivarian national development'. These elements bear much resemblance to how Pellegrini (2016) as well as Kohl and Farthing (2012) have analyzed the popular imaginaries and discourse about extractivist industries in Bolivia. From their description of the Bolivian situation, we find out the definition of resource nationalism as a set of discursive practices that define natural resources and activities related to them as a "general interest" of the nation which is protected by a "*legitimate national government that uses the revenues generated by extractive activities to finance social policies and public infrastructure*" (Pellegrini 2016, 200). This contains strong discursive elements of denouncing foreign interests that are seen to exploit national areas for their own benefit, and, for a successful discourse, takes strength from the deep-rooted history of colonial exploitation (Kohl and Farthing 2012, Pellegrini 2018). In the three representations we see how resource nationalism appears in the Venezuelan governmental discourse as well. In the first representation, we see how the government builds, through antagonistic discursive practices and 'dynamic' portrayal of national mining, a mining sector that appears as superior to other options and a state that through laws and institutions establishes itself to be the defender of that sector from outside 'others'. In the second representation, we see discursive elements that assure the capabilities of governmental actors in guaranteeing the well-being of "the people" and reassurances that the governmental-led mining can indeed 'cure' the problems of extractivism. In the third representation, we see the creation of a national imaginary that is based in the Bolivarian revolution and the legacy of Hugo Chávez, and how closely the natural resource-based model of production is linked to this history.

This 'natural resource nationalism-leaning' discourse does not originate in the opening of the AMO in 2016, however, and we must investigate a longer process to understand the discursive practices when it comes to mining ventures. As established earlier, Venezuelan history is tightly linked to the relation between the state and Venezuelan oil resources. When analyzing the discourse

on mining ventures, we have to look into the historical context of Venezuela, especially through petroleum and the Bolivarian revolution, started by Chávez. What we need to establish about the Chavist era is the importance that the political rhetoric of Chávez had in creating a completely new hegemonic discourse in Venezuela that is characterized as being *“an anti-status-quo mode of governance keen on replacing all political institutions associated with the old establishment, the presentation of his person as the central figure of a new inclusive nation-project, and a strong emphasis on turning the country into a participatory democracy”* (Abi Hassan 2015, 30). This was achieved in part by legitimizing the discourse through linking it in history, and establishing an anti-imperialist, post-colonialist understanding of Venezuelan history (Rodner 2016). As seen earlier, this nation project was tightly linked to the imaginaries of nationalized oil and the idea of modernity through oil. As Abi-Hassan (2015) asserts, this Chavist populism has continued to the Maduro era, and the discourse established by Chávez has shown to have a hegemonic-enough of a position to endure even in the ‘post-Chavist’ era with the Maduro led government.

The resource nationalist discourse on mining ventures faces a unique challenge, however, that the Chavist era discourse on petroleum did not. The situation is different, not only because Chávez is gone and there is skepticism about the rhetorical skills of Maduro (Rodner 2016), but also because of the economic and political crisis that the government has had to deal with. Furthermore, the mining industry does not have a strong institutional role rooted in history, unlike the oil sector, which it had already before the Bolivarian revolution. To face all of this uncertainty, I found that the representations repeat and emphasize the building of national unity, and attempt to base mining activities in the same continuum of the Bolivarian revolution, thus continuing with the same discursive practices of before, highlighting the role of president Maduro as a follower of Chávez and his policies. Furthermore, we see other elements in the discourse that bring validity to the claim that the new mining ventures indeed have the capacity of being productive for the national economy. Apart from the features of natural resource nationalism, as is promising social welfare through resource revenue, the mining industry is linked to a whole set of economic reforms as part of ‘integral development’ and as highly technological industry. In the same way, the old problems of petroleum based, resource rentierist economy, are told to have been fixed in the new economic model. However, to maintain the connection and discursive power of the Chavist era, the petroleum industry that is being criticized is turned into an ahistorical concept, rather than a reality in Venezuela’s Chavist history. These discursive elements bring with them a developmentalist, through

the aforementioned idea of modernization and economism, and the positivist³⁴ view, that places economic development and a belief in the capabilities of technology in solving problems in an extractivist industry as part of a discourse. The AMO becomes a manifestation of the ‘modern’ that is believed to ‘develop’ the country through economy with the help of a belief in the idea of progress that can cure the problems of earlier production methods by ‘modernizing’. Seeing that mining does not have a strong historical context in Venezuela, from which to draw more legitimizing power, this feature appears much throughout the data and blends into the resource nationalist discourse by showing the capability of the Bolivarian state to reform its economic base, while also emphasizing the grand opportunities and skill that is seen to define the AMO project, envisioned by Hugo Chávez for “the people”.

6.4. Why is foreign capital so conflictive?

As we have seen, the discourse follows closely the logic of a natural resource nationalism based discursive practices. To fit foreign capital into such a discourse is not an easy task and, as we have seen, it is done so in the data by presenting the government protecting the sovereignty of Venezuela from its influence. In fact, we see a common problem with countries that employ a resource nationalist discourse when it comes to the need of foreign capital – as Kohl and Farthing (2012, 231) frame it in the case of Morales’ Bolivia, *“this [need for foreign capital] puts a left-wing, anti-imperialist government in the awkward position of relying economically on the very foreign firms it often publicly attacks”*. Furthermore, Rosales’ (2018) characterization of Venezuela’s oil resource policy as “hybrid resource nationalism” does indicate similar patterns of a problematic relationship between the resources of a state and the dependence on foreign investments. Rosales shows that this hybrid model welcomes investments in an unprecedented way, comparing to previous views of leftist politics, but the centralization of decision making, the control of resources, rather than full ownership, and maximizing rents for the Bolivarian model of redistribution of wealth are enough to create an equilibrium between the socialist project and foreign investments (Rosales 2018). In my analysis, however, the data shows a stronger evasion of foreign capital related topics than the ‘hybrid model’ would perhaps allow – as we have seen, the data minimizes the role of foreign

³⁴ In fact, Lander (2013) observes that the overall governmental discourse had shifted increasingly towards a “developmentalist and extractivist tone” already in 2013. Seeing the discourse presented here, we can see that this tendency is continuing and visible in the discourse regarding the new mining ventures.

investments while commending the importance of small-scale mining. This can be partly due to the need to convince that the Chavist era focus on opting for locally productive units and collective property is still a viable scheme in the AMO, regardless of the real change towards favoring direct state involvement and cooperation with larger private producers that has happened in many sectors due to the economic and political changes during the post-Chavist era (Angosto-Ferrández 2019) - changes that concede more power to foreign capital and could put into question the discourse of resource nationalism. Nevertheless, at the level of discourse, we see a problem as all the aforementioned characteristics require the assumption that investments are only a 'necessary evil' rather than a morally acceptable opportunity by themselves. My findings in the data do support this and the discourse does fall under a stronger emphasis of resource nationalism than practice.

This inherent necessity of foreign capital is shown in fragments of the data that are separate from the discursive style of the rest of the data, which does fall under the resource nationalist discourse. Enthusiasm towards foreign investments does not fit in the discourse but for the AMO project a steady flow of foreign investments is considered necessary for the megaproject, as we have seen both through the extractivist framework and through the (limited) expressions by Venezuelan governmental actors. The government is showing to have an open mind towards investments by including language in the general discourse that is more favorable towards foreign investments and which keeps reminding that the AMO is indeed a viable option for those investments. The data that diverts from the resource nationalist discourse does speak this language more than any other piece of data, which is also visible in the inauguration speech of Maduro, with mostly representatives of foreign companies present, which directs its attention much more towards investment opportunities, achievements in making Venezuela a good place to invest and offers a public display of signing agreements between foreign companies and the Venezuelan government. Angosto-Ferrández (2019) confirms that the Venezuelan government has indeed needed to provide reassurance for foreign companies to invest in the AMO, and that a "multilateral pragmatic approach" of searching for investments and international trade deals has characterized the Bolivarian governments. Therefore, this exception in the otherwise nationalist discourse does reveal the necessity of foreign capital, one that Venezuela has not been able to surpass, and shows a conflict in the discourse is elevated by the AMO project because of the need for steady flow of investments needed to begin large-scale mining projects in the area which is still at its initial steps of its promise of becoming a credible alternative source for revenue to challenge the oil sector.

7. Conclusion

The goal of this study has been to examine the links of foreign capital in large-scale extraction projects and my focus has been on the case of the Venezuelan new Orinoco Mining Arch project. In this thesis, I have investigated these links through analyzing governmental discourse, with the notions of extractivism and developmentalism providing the theoretical framework and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) offering the methodological basis for the study.

In this thesis I have given an overview of the Venezuelan context of extraction and how the oil-based extractive model has dominated the country's economic (and social) policies and how this extractive industry has been established as part of Venezuela's Bolivarian national imaginary. The new AMO project has brought forward an unprecedented interest in the mining industry and thus made the study of a mining-centered discourse all the more timely and important. Framing the study using the concept of extractivism, I investigated this discourse and the role that foreign capital, fundamentally linked to many extractivist mega-projects, plays in this new extractivist turn that Venezuela is currently experiencing through its mining ventures.

This thesis set out to answer the over-arching research question: *what kind of a governmental discourse is established around new natural resource exploitation (mega)projects, and how does this discourse address the role of foreign capital?* This question has been approached in this study by leaning on the rich tradition of CDA. Using methods that support the CDA approach, I first uncovered three representations of mining that were present in the governmental discourse, and then compared these to the ways foreign capital is involved in the discourse. The findings indicate that attempts to legitimize governmental mining ventures are carried through by building a public image of an ecologically sustainable, dynamic and sovereign mining industry that is deeply linked to the Chavist-nationalist imaginary, and intertwined with more subtle elements, including foreign capital, in the discourse.

In this thesis we have seen the persistence of the resource nationalist discourse of the post-Chavist Maduro-led government even in the recent aspirations to create a large-scale mining industry in Venezuela. We have seen how foreign capital is tightly linked to this discourse, accentuating nationalist tendencies, and at the same time being 'the exception' to the discourse that confirms the existence of a foreign investment-dependent system in conflict with itself, most of all on the discursive level. Through discourse, we understand the perceived 'reality' through the

narratives that the governmental discourse creates. Through this discursive approach, we have seen how the Venezuelan resource nationalism has power in creating a hegemonic discourse that reflects on other, older, narratives of 'development'. What I have found through analyzing the data is that this resource nationalist discourse, its origin and its features are currently reproducing a developmentalist based neo-extractivist narrative which praises (economic) 'development', considers resource extraction as necessary, and follows a neoliberal logic of accumulation of capital.

While the Venezuelan government might insist on national sovereignty alongside ecological and socialist principles, the narrative that the discourse presents behind these affirmations is one that supports the same principles of progress as the system itself criticizes: a belief in an economically fueled development that benefits from the exploitation and destruction of much of the socio-ecologic order. This we can understand from a few key 'reality-building' elements of the discourse. Firstly, the insistence that 'development' and well-being of the people can be achieved mostly through the 'development' of productive, high-revenue sectors and the belief in the progress of technology, that the government claims to have achieved for the AMO, can fix large structural problems of extractivist sectors. Secondly, creating an image of foreign capital as 'necessary evil' does, in fact, legitimate the involvement of TNCs in the Venezuelan mining ventures, which creates the conditions of accepting them as an integral part of the system. And thirdly, the strong discursive claim that an extractivist sector can be the savior of an economic system that was previously based on another extractivist sector strengthens the notion that extractivism is indeed an integral part of the 'narrative of development'.

Thus, looking at the questions presented at the beginning of this thesis, foreign capital does fit in the discourse because, despite of its apparent potential for conflict, it is part of the narrative that the governmental discourse creates. At the same time, however, the problems of delivering the populist promises of the same discourse to the Venezuelan people – ecological sustainability, economic growth, jobs and general welfare, and sovereignty – under the neo-developmental and neo-extractivist narrative of the current crisis have the potential of seriously challenging the discourse and, thus, that 'reality' which it presents. The processes that are challenging this hegemonic discourse in Venezuela at this moment in history are a topic that deserve further investigation.

The relevance of this thesis is not only for the case of Venezuela. Rather, as we have seen, extractive activity and its conflictive potential is ubiquitous. The Venezuelan case shows that extractivist activities are being reimagined and included in 'development' plans of many resource-rich nations, sometimes replacing other extractivist industries, sometimes complementing them. What arises is the question concerning how governments might continue to 'sell' extractivism? This becomes especially relevant in cases like Venezuela, but similarly in Bolivia and Ecuador, where a strong opposition to the capitalistic economic model prevails, but extractivism endures, in state policy. The pervasiveness of developmentalist ontologies serve to understand these questions better. The discursive notion of 'development', bound to the developmentalist logic of economic primacy and the pursue for modernity, appears in many forms in different political contexts and, despite the differences in the political orientation of governments, we can find similarities in the ontological positions of the actors through the idea of developmentalism. Development might be a notion that holds little value outside discourse, but its manifestation as neo-extractivism has an immense potential for destruction in the socio-ecological context.

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Appendices

Appendix A: The speech data

Here I present the speech of Nicolás Maduro Moros, President of Venezuela held at the central bank of Venezuela February 24th, 2016. The speech was retrieved from Youtube:

- Bracci Roa, L. 2016. Presidente Maduro activa el Arco Minero del Orinoco e instala Motor Minería. [online video file] retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gj1XighWg4k> (accessed 18.09.2019).

The speech forms a part of a larger event to activate the Orinoco Mining Arch – project by introducing the Arch and signing some preliminary contracts between the state of Venezuela and investors from different TNCs. The event was televised and there were investors from transnational companies present, for whom the event was mostly directed. Also, in the audience, on further rows, some “small-scale miners” were indicated to sit in the audience and a few times the attention was drawn upon them.

The event contained other speeches and discourses by government officials, but the largest part was given to Maduro who spoke during most of the event. The speech transcribed here is that of Nicolás Maduro, without containing the rest of the speeches by other governmental actors.

Speech as transcribed:

De activación del motor minero de la agenda economía bolivariana. A todos los trabajadores y trabajadoras del banco central de Venezuela, un abrazo fraterno, solidario a cada uno de ustedes (*applause*).

Ya veníamos, en la puerta del banco central, conversando con los trabajadores siempre, y les decía a los compañeros: siempre hay que estar en contacto directo con trabajadores. Saber de su opinión, sus expectativas, sus formas de vida. Saber la pertinencia y el impacto real de lo que hacemos. Todos los días en las distintas formas. No podemos construir liderazgo a aéreos, repúblicas aéreas... Tenemos que construir liderazgo en repúblicas... reales que caminen con los pies que trabajan, que piensen con la cabeza de los que sienten la patria. Y que tengan la capacidad de sentir, a profundidad, el amor que nos mueve como país.

Hoy es un acto muy importante como ha dicho el presidente del banco central de Venezuela, matemático Nelson Merentes. Y el ministro de petróleo y minería, querido compañero Eulogio del Pino. Es un día magnifico en el marco de la agenda económica bolivariana. Quiero agradecer, de manera muy especial, a todos los inversionistas, a todas las empresas de 35 países. Decimos nosotros, no sé si tiene traducción, que vengan... lo que voy a decir no se si tiene traducción, que vengan 150 empresas... las más importantes del mundo en el campo de minería de 35 países, atendiendo la invitación. Dispuestos a trabajar, decimos en Venezuela: no es concha de ajo, no es cualquier cosa. Gracias por estar con nosotros, es una demostración

de fe... de confianza en Venezuela. Esto no surge de ayer para hoy. Se viene trabajando. Primer lugar, esta magnífica gráfica, fotografía, de cuando el comandante Hugo Chávez, por allá enfrentando hace tres años una lucha, un duelo contra una enfermedad que le atacó tan joven, 59, 58, años. En pleno esplendor de su liderazgo, creador, creativo magnífico. Lo recordamos perfectamente cuando estábamos

trabajando toda la estrategia internacional inversionista, investigación, año 2011, 2012, y como unir el proyecto de la faja petrolífera del Orinoco, todo el proceso del desarrollo integral de la faja petrolífera del Orinoco, con lo que el definió el Arco minero del Orinoco. Abajo del río Orinoco. Al sur del río Orinoco, nos ha llevado tiempo organizar las investigaciones científicas con apoyo de tecnología de diversos países del mundo, de Rusia, de China, de República Islámica de Irán, de Cuba, de Canadá. Entre los que recuerdo en este momento... ¿Ha? (someone says more) de Sudáfrica, Angola, Brasil, y bueno, los científicos los técnicos, los profesionales de nuestra patria venezolana. Organizar el concepto del arco minero del Orinoco.

Y utilizando la metodología de planificación de los bloques de la faja petrolífera hemos venido definiendo con mucha claridad todo el marco organizativo de lo que van ser las áreas y los bloques de inversión para el desarrollo del arco minero del Orinoco. Venezuela oscila hoy con unas reservas probadas entre 364.000 toneladas de oro por ejemplo. Las últimas investigaciones nos dan, solamente en la zona oriental del arco minero, la potencialidad de 4.300 toneladas en el campo de oro nada más. Y con la firma del documento donde iniciamos la certificación internacional oficial del arco minero del Orinoco dicen las proyecciones de los expertos que Venezuela pudiera colocarse por encima de las 7.000 toneladas con la segunda reserva de oro del planeta tierra. Hoy por hoy (*applause*).

Estos son datos de mucha importancia. Porque, además, vamos trabajando... nosotros tenemos un proyecto de país, el plan de la patria... tenemos un plan... la agenda económica bolivariana para enfrentar, bueno, el desarrollo del país en cara de la emergencia que estamos viviendo. Como producto, ustedes saben de la caída de los precios del petróleo. Hoy el petróleo otra vez llegó a 24... hmm... es imposible que se mantengan estos precios y no se quiebre todo de la industria petrolera del mundo... en sectores más poderosas como la venezolana. Que estamos en imposibilidad de seguir produciendo así... esperando mejores tiempos. Tenemos un proyecto de país. Tenemos un plan... pero vamos más allá. Hmm? Ya tenemos los planes específicos. Tenemos ya la proyección del arco minero, en este caso. Del motor minero. Tenemos la experiencia, tenemos las alianzas nacionales y tenemos las alianzas internacionales.

Lo tenemos todo para activar este gran motor con los actores fundamentales, inversionistas nacionales, los más importantes inversionistas del mundo de 35 países, más de 150 empresas. Con nuestra minería artesanal pequeña y mediana con una gran experiencia. A la cual estamos dando, y les vamos a dar un trato especial. Y con una visión clara del desarrollo minero a partir de los conceptos del ecosocialismo. Del respeto absoluto a la biodiversidad, a la ecología, al ambiente, al ser humano. El desarrollo de la minería en función del ser humano. No, al desarrollo de la minería en función de destruir el hábitat y explotar al ser humano. Tenemos los conceptos muy claros basados en el humanismo bolivariano... En nuestro máximo orgullo, invitados internacionales, Bolívar...hmm? Y el humanismo que se prende de allí. Bolívar, todo es libertad. Bolívar todo es humanidad. Y lo que nos mueve a nosotros, el pueblo, desde el punto de vista espiritual humano: lo grande, aspiramos a lo grande. Y para nosotros lo grande es el ser humano... Generar riqueza para desarrollar al ser humano y la sociedad, sobre todo en tiempos de dificultad. Como en las que vive Venezuela... En las que viven los países petroleros y en las que vive, en general, la economía mundial.

Ahora, este arco minero, como ha explicado muy bien nuestro ministro, tiene inmensas potencialidades que están ya en... están en pleno desarrollo...hmm. No solamente el oro... está un material estratégico, el coltán... Hmm... está todo el desarrollo del diamante en Venezuela... con las debidas certificaciones... internacionales. Ya está el desarrollo avanzado del hierro venezolano... de la bauxita, del aluminio ¿hmm? Y del cobre asociado a todas estas minas. ¿Hmmm?

El concepto es hacer una explotación respetuosa del ambiente, del ser humano... y hacer un proceso de desarrollo industrial en Venezuela. De industrialización del oro, del cobre, del diamante... Avanzar en nuevos conceptos de desarrollo, combinando la gran inversión, la gran tecnología... combinándolos con los saberes sectoriales y el desarrollo cultural diverso de los mineros artesanales, que en Venezuela, bueno, son centenarios en su conocimiento y en sus capacidades de trabajo. Así que está todo dado para que iniciemos una alianza... una asociación ganar-ganar, como decimos. Nuevas fuentes de riqueza para Venezuela.

El marco jurídico está establecido. Es muy claro... Es muy claro. Y en su columna vertebral está el que nuestro país se desarrolle, aguas abajo, en la capacidad de generar nuevas fuentes de riqueza... de corto, mediano y largo plazo. Sin lugar a duda, la minería es una de las fuentes más inmediatas donde el país puede equilibrar sus ingresos sus cuentas para mantener el ritmo del desarrollo social, de construcción de igualdad y de la felicidad social... y de estabilización en general de nuestra sociedad. Es la minería uno de los elementos que tenemos, digamos... con la mejor planificación y proyección y que nos permite, hoy, echar a andar este motor minero con mucha fuerza... quizás uno de los motores que esta arrancando con la mayor fuerza de los 14 motores que hemos planificado de la agenda económica bolivariana, con las que estamos construyendo el futuro encarando la tormenta y creando condiciones para una economía nueva (*applause*).

Una economía potencia, una economía potencia. Que inversionistas de continente americano, bienvenidos. De Canadá hasta la Patagonia, bienvenidos de la Asia, África, Europa y mas allá. Bienvenidos todos. Estamos ya preparados y en condiciones de avanzar, de manera inmediata, el desarrollo de este motor minero... que, como decía, es una de las fuentes de riqueza de nuestro país hmm. además, qué ustedes como socios de Venezuela sepan que en Venezuela se está construyendo un omo de lo social. Si no fuera por el modelo social que hoy tenemos hubiera sido imposible soportar la baja de los ingresos de 97% en divisas convertibles que ha tenido Venezuela en el último año . Hubiera sido imposible soportar las inversiones para sostener el empleo que en Venezuela, como ustedes saben, es uno de los objetos de mayor cuidado del gobierno y del estado. El empleo de calidad, el empleo productivo. Para sostener el ingreso nacional... el ingreso de los trabajadores... el ingreso de la clase media. Para sostener la educación pública gratuita de calidad, es una inversión gigantesca. Hmm?

Estábamos revisando, con el informe, extraordinario que dio el vicepresidente de la República, profesor Aristóbulo Istúriz Almeida, ante la asamblea nacional, ayer. Lo felicito públicamente, un extraordinario informe. Estamos analizando (*applause*)datos, no?... de la década de los 90. Datos de estos años de revolución. Y como eso ha impactado en los niveles de vida por ejemplo en la educación... en la década de los 90 de cada diez niños solo cinco iban a la escuela primaria. Hoy van nueve. En la década de los 90 de cada diez jóvenes solo iban cuatro a la educación secundaria de los liceos, hoy van ocho... La meta es subir, y subir. Pero dond... donde más impresionante es nivel universitario que es el futuro de los países... conocimiento científico de mayor nivel. En la década de los 90 de cada diez jóvenes, entre 18 y 30 años , iban a la universidad dos. Hoy van nueve... a la universidad. Sin contar con lo que llamamos en Venezuela las misiones sociales educativas, donde se incorporan otro gran contingente de venezolanos... venezolanas, ya en edad adulta estudiar su primaria, secundaria, carrera universitaria, carreras técnicas.

¿Como se sostiene esto?... si ha caído el ingreso nacional por fuentes de riqueza petrolera el 97 por ciento? Se sostiene porque hay un sistema de capta... de creación de riqueza nacional... de captación de la riqueza nacional y de distribución justa (*emphasizing*) de la riqueza nacional. Esto lo digo para ustedes, no, como parte del conocimiento de... al país que llegan sus inversiones. Es un país que está construyendo otra vez, de la justicia social de la igualdad social, la felicidad de un pueblo para sostener el desarrollo económico. Para sostener la creación de la riqueza real. Y el motor minero. Y específicamente el arco minero del Orinoco es una de las fuentes más magníficas y extraordinarias que hoy tiene Venezuela y que hoy activo como fuente de riqueza (aplausos) que vaya equilibrando los ingresos... Los vaya diversificando y vaya sustituyendo el petróleo como única fuente de riqueza y divisa internacional.

14 motores de creación de riqueza nacional... Y para que creamos riqueza? Para la felicidad social. Es nuestro concepto. Somos socialistas por eso. Socialistas del siglo 21, pues. Y ojalá socialistas del siglo 22. Lo que vamos a vamos a construir es el largo camino superando dificultades y atravesando el desierto... las veces que nos toque atravesar el desierto como en esta oportunidad. Así que, bueno, yo quiero que procedamos. Quiero proceder inmediatamente, dentro de esta línea de acción a tomar la primera decisión y afirmar, de manera inmediata, la activación... el inicio... en este acto histórico, que tiene el impacto que tuvo el acto donde el comandante Hugo Chávez aprobó la certificación de las reservas petrolíferas de la faja del Orinoco.

Alguna gente siempre de manera ligera e irresponsable. O a veces mezquina y egoísta o envidiosa... hay gente envidiosa en la vida, verdad? Algunas ideologías promueven mucho la envidia, la mezquindad y egoísmo... Cuando el comandante Chávez dio el paso de certificar las reservas petroleras se burlaron. Porque decían que eso era casi carbón y el comandante Chávez dijo, no, vamos a certificarlo y Venezuela va a tener ahí su reserva petrolera en función de un desarrollo integral de recursos petroleros. Y así se hizo... y hoy por hoy Venezuela es reconocida en el mundo ... certificado internacionalmente por tener la mayor reserva petrolera de este planeta, y tener un marco jurídico de inversiones muy exitoso donde participan también más de 40 firmas internacionales junto a nuestra empresa PDVSA. Lo mismo, con la misma carga histórica, yo en este momento, voy a firmar el decreto para que se proceda inmediatamente a la cuantificación... la cuantificación... y la certificación de las reservas mineras contenidas en el arco minero del Orinoco, de manera inmediata. Así que firmo este decreto (*Maduro signs a document amid applause*) para que se proceda inmediatamente hacer la certificación.

Y los venezolanos tengamos. Y los venezolanos tengamos una base más sólida aún, para las asociaciones, las inversiones, el desarrollo de este arco minero. Y podamos hablarle al mundo con mayor propiedad sobre los proyectos y las reservas, en oro, en diamantes, en cobre, etcétera etcétera.. Así que, bueno, procédanse, de manera inmediata. Ya las contrataciones están hechas. Hoy vamos a firmar un conjunto de contratos para proceder a la certificación de tres áreas del arco minero del Orinoco. Así que yo pido por favor al ministro Eulogio del Pino ¿no? Y al equipo del protocolo... que procedan de inmediato a la firma de los memorándum de entendimiento con las empresas internacionales, que desde ya se incorporan a los procesos de certificación de las áreas del arco minero del Orinoco y desde ya se incorporan con su inversión para producir en Venezuela en asociación de acuerdo el marco jurídico que aprobé en la (militante) el 30 de diciembre. Adelante por favor.

(A moment of signing documents, Maduro's speech continues after at 44:45)

Bueno, es muy importante lo que se acaba de firmar... se ha firmado... todo esto hay que informarlo muy bien a nuestro pueblo... hmm?... informarlo a nivel internacional a través de las embajadas. Nuestra

canciller¹ está en Nueva York dado que estamos presidiendo el Consejo de Seguridad de Naciones Unidas... y han tenido que estar varias oportunidades. Vicecanciller de África, el decano... y los vicecancilleres del mundo. Vicecanciller del Asia, de los que veo aquí... están embajadores de más de veinte países. Bienvenidos embajadores, embajador. Queridos y queridas, hmm?

Hay que informar al mundo que se acaba de firmar precisamente... eeehh... el documento para proceder a la certificación de cuatro áreas muy importantes... con empresas de China, y del África, en este caso. Son cuatro áreas que tenemos que familiarizarnos los venezolanos con el motor minero. Porque además del motor minero, como estaba hablando yo con el presidente de la Corporación de Minería de Venezuela, compañero economista, José Salamat Khan... de aquí se desprende?, bueno, no solamente aguas abajo... un conjunto de industrias que van a desarrollar y van a llegar a las ciudades más importantes del país. Y tenemos que prepararnos desde ya. Toda la economía comunal del país para participar y toda la economía social... y la economía en general.

Se firmó la certificación y el inicio de la operación en el área número uno donde va a tener predominancia la investigación y certificación de las reservas de coltán... entre otras.... Además de bauxita y diamante... pero tiene predominancia el coltán. Igualmente, el área número dos del Arco Minero... hmmm?... donde tiene predominancia el oro aluvial, conocido así... en el río Cuchivero y el río Aro, respetando estrictamente con la mayor... mejor tecnología, nuestra biodiversidad y nuestro ambiente. Igualmente se acaba de firmar documentos para proceder a certificar e iniciar las operaciones en el área número tres, entre el río Aro y el límite este del Arco Minero... es de predominancia de bauxita, oro y hierro. Y el área número cuatro ... la extensión del arco minero donde predomina, fundamentalmente, el oro, el cobre, el caolín y la dolomita, es lo fundamental.

Estos cuatro documentos que se han firmado, bueno, forman parte del plan de motor minero y de manera inmediata procede al proceso de certificación y de preparación de las inversiones de la explotación y del desarrollo de estas cuatro áreas. No, como áreas como estas, bueno, eeh... Ya están determinadas... varias decenas de áreas en el arco minero y están en el proceso de conversación y negociación con inversionistas nacionales e internacionales, y con mineros pequeños, medianos y artesanales y el desarrollo de las inversiones integrales en el arco minero.

Igualmente, hemos firmado un documento muy importante... yo le pediría a... el ministro Eulogio del Pino que amplíe las explicaciones de el memorándum de entendimiento entre la empresa canadiense "Gold Reserve", presentes aquí y el estado venezolano. Una inversión muy importante... para nuestro país. La resolución de un conflicto que, bueno, venía llevándose trabajándose.. y que ha tenido un final feliz... ganar-ganar. Para el país, integralmente, en el marco de su constitución y sus leyes y para la empresa gold reserve igualmente. Y un conflicto y un pleito que teníamos, ahora somos socios para el ganar-ganar, para el desarrollo de un proyecto de más de cinco mil millones de dólares. Por favor, ministro Eulogio del Pino.

(Minister Eulogio del Pino speaks, Maduro's speech continues after)

Muchas gracias a todo el esfuerzo del ministro Eulogio del Pino... de presidente de la corporación venezolana en minería... yo quisiera que el presidente de la corporación venezolana en la minería nos hiciera también un comentario sobre la importancia de la activación de este motor minero como hemos venido organizando, concatenando todo el proceso para que Venezuela tenga un desarrollo autónomo, soberano... como llaman ahí por el mundo: amigable con el ambiente. Nosotros llamamos eso, un poquito más allá, más profundo. Un proyecto ecosocialista... hmmm? Respetuoso del ambiente, del ser humano y

con un objetivo del desarrollo social de nuestra patria, de nuestro país, por favor, por favor presidente de la corporación venezolana de minería don José Salamat Khan

(The president of MINERVEN speaks, Maduro's speech continues at 58:00)

Muchas gracias. Un aplauso. José Salamat Khan... chino Khan... yo lo he conocido como tal... el chino Khan. Nos conocimos hace casi treinta años en las calles en el movimiento sindical. No era tan pacífico como es ahora. Era tan apasionado como es ahora también, bueno, todo eso hay que darle conocer al mundo. En el mundo entero. Por aquí está nuestro embajador en los Estados Unidos de Norteamérica, licenciado Maximilien Arveláiz.... Lo invité especialmente para que viniera a este evento con otros invitados, el economista Max que nos visita, max... hmm?economista.

Interesante la campaña electoral en los Estados Unidos, no? Ayer ganó Donald Trump en nevada, y Bernie Sanders ahora le está ganando en las encuestas a Hillary Clinton. Algo está pasando en los Estados Unidos verdad? El voto antisistema de la izquierda y de la ultraderecha. Vamos a ver que pasa en las elecciones, un saludo, bienvenidos embajador. Aunque el presidente Obama todavía no las recibe las cartas credenciales a nuestro embajador. Yo espero que ahora, cuando viene el 9 de marzo, presidente Obama desestime el decreto de sanciones contra Venezuela y le reciba las cartas credenciales a Maximilien Arveláiz... para que demuestre su buena voluntad de relaciones con Venezuela con el ALBA y con Latinoamérica, verdad? (aplausos)Sería un gesto sencillo, recibir las cartas credenciales de Maximilian Arveláiz como embajador ante los Estados Unidos.

Verdad? Y nos entendemos, nos conversamos. Obama será Obama toda la vida y los Estados Unidos serán los Estados Unidos... y Venezuela será Venezuela... la de Bolívar y la de Chávez... toda la vida también- pero tenemos que dialogar. Tenemos que entendernos (*applause*) tenemos que respetarnos.

Aprovecho, como estamos hablando de minería, para hacer este pequeño comentario. De la minería diplomática, hmmm bueno... para ser realidad todo lo que ha dicho José Salamat Khan... todo el desarrollo integral... que no se repita el viejo esquema del desarrollo minero destructivo, del ser humano, en primer lugar... de la naturaleza, y de los países... superar ese modelo...hmm? Y no se repita menos aún el viejo modelo petrolero que se incubó en Venezuela hace cien años. Que destruyó el país, sin lugar a duda, no?... Y que desplazó y acabó toda la actividad económica de un país, que hace 100 nos producía todo lo que consumía. Un poco más de 100 años. Destruyó la cultura productiva del campo. La sacó del raíz, la destruyó. Y llevó a nuestro país un modelo llamado rentista de vivir de una renta e importar lo todo. Bastante fuerzas se han hecho para superarlo.

Pero llegó la hora de superarlo. Esta es la hora. Lo superamos Hoy y ahora o lo superamos hoy y ahora. No tenemos ya opciones. La opción es superarlo por la vía del trabajo productivo de articulación de. Alianzas de la agenda económica... de los motores, del desarrollo de una nueva economía... todo lo demás es falso... Todo lo demás es falso... Y por la vía de desarrollar nuestro petróleo también con los nuevos esquemas.

Todo esto lo digo porque así, como en la faja petrolífera del Orinoco, firmé hace unos días la creación de las zonas del desarrollo estratégico de la faja petrolífera del Orinoco Hugo Chavez de las 64 mil hectáreas... perdón... de los 64 mil metros cuadrados (someone comments)... kilómetros cuadrados... de la Faja Petrolífera del Orinoco para su desarrollo integral. Para desarrollarla como una faja agrícola...

productora de alimento... Para desarrollar su servicio vivienda, escuelas, universidades... para desarrollarla integralmente... Para desarrollarla industrialmente... la industria ligera etcétera etcétera. Yo voy a proceder a firmar, no? , la creación de la zona estratégica del desarrollo integral del Arco Minero del Orinoco para darle sustento (aplausos) programática... Sustento programático, orgánico, legal y económico al desarrollo integral de todo este Arco Minero del Orinoco.

En el concepto que ha expuesto de manera breve pero contundente el presidente de la corporación venezolana de minoría... de minería hmmm?... Son 111mil kilómetros cuadrados... de punta a punta, del Esequibo hasta nuestra hermana Colombia. Y si sumamos Orinoco Norte, 64 mil kilómetros cuadrados... Orinoco sur, el arco minero... 111mil kilómetros cuadrados.... Estamos hablando de 175 kilómetros cuadrados de desarrollo integral petrolífero, minero, agrícola, humano...

Ese es el centro... el centro de la agenda económica bolivariana. El centro del plan de la patria. Construir una nueva economía. Esto solo se va a hacer con gran voluntad. Con gran empeño... pero además con una guía muy clara...hmm? Plan de la patria, la agenda económica bolivariana hmm... nosotros tenemos un proyecto del país muy claro hmmm.. que nos convoca a todos y... que es capaz de integrar todas las voluntades... voluntades de nuestro país. Tenemos un plan para enfrentar en cara esta tormenta y salir de aquí más fuertes con una vía hacia el desarrollo real, productivo del país. La generación de fuentes de riqueza pero además tenemos un proyecto... un plan. Tenemos lo más grande que podemos vernos a nosotros y que es el amor, el amor profundo por nuestro pueblo... por nuestros hijos... y por el derecho al futuro que tiene Venezuela. Eso es lo que estamos construyendo... el derecho al futuro que tiene este rincón del planeta tierra que a ser

Venezuela potencia. Muchas gracias. Activado el octavo motor de minería de agenda económica bolivariana. ¡Qué viva Venezuela! (*applause*). Buenas tardes a todos ustedes, gracias.

Appendix B: The news articles

Here is a list of the new articles retrieved from the official web page of the mining ministry of Venezuela. The news articles were retrieved from the “*news archive*” – section of the web page and contains all the news stories, in chronological order, from August 2nd, 2016 to March 30th, 2017.

Link of the archive: <http://www.desarrollominero.gob.ve/archivo-de-noticias/>

All links were accessed on May 11th, 2020.

1. 2016, August 2nd, “Minerven impulsará Motor Minería Ecológica de la Agenda Económica Bolivariana”, <http://www.desarrollominero.gob.ve/minerven-impulsara-motor-mineria-ecologica-de-la-agenda-economica-bolivariana/>
2. 2016, September 25th, “Programa de Recuperación de las zonas y riberas del Río Caroní (Galería)”, <http://www.desarrollominero.gob.ve/programa-de-recuperacion-de-las-zonas-y-riberas-del-rio-caroni-galeria/>
3. 2016, September 25th, “Iniciado programa de recuperación de la cuenca del río Caroní”, <http://www.desarrollominero.gob.ve/iniciado-programa-de-recuperacion-de-la-cuenca-del-rio-caroni/>
4. 2016, October 7th, “Gobierno Bolivariano arrancó en Guayana plan piloto para legalización de la actividad minera”, <http://www.desarrollominero.gob.ve/gobierno-bolivariano-arranco-en-guayana-plan-piloto-para-legalizacion-de-la-actividad-minera/>
5. 2016, October 12th, “Realizadas Mesas de Trabajo con comunidades indígenas cercanas a las minas Paso Diablo y Mina Norte en Zulia”, <http://www.desarrollominero.gob.ve/realizadas-mesas-de-trabajo-con-comunidades-indigenas-cercanas-a-las-minas-paso-diablo-y-mina-norte-en-zulia/>
6. 2016, November 18th, “Reincorporación de Venezuela al proceso Kimberley facilita acceso al gran mercado internacional de diamantes”, <http://www.desarrollominero.gob.ve/reincorporacion-de-venezuela-al-proceso-kimberley-facilita-acceso-al-gran-mercado-internacional-de-diamantes/>
7. 2016, November 22nd, “Gobierno Bolivariano promovió oportunidades de inversión minera en Australia”, <http://www.desarrollominero.gob.ve/gobierno-bolivariano-promovio-oportunidades-de-inversion-minera-en-australia/>
8. 2016, November 28th, “Fundición del primer lingote de oro ecológico producido por los pequeños mineros del estado Bolívar (Galería)”, <http://www.desarrollominero.gob.ve/fundicion-del-primer-lingote-de-oro-ecologico-producido-por-los-pequenos-mineros-del-estado-bolivar-galeria/>
9. 2016, November 28th, “Gobierno Bolivariano incorporó 39 Brigadas Mineras Socialistas al nuevo modelo productivo nacional”, <http://www.desarrollominero.gob.ve/gobierno-bolivariano-incorporo-39-brigadas-mineras-socialistas-al-nuevo-modelo-productivo-nacional/>
10. 2016, November 28th, “Golpe de timón minero”, <http://www.desarrollominero.gob.ve/golpe-de-timon-minero-galeria/>
11. 2016, December 4th, “Restauradas más de 180 fachadas de viviendas y recuperados 11 espacios públicos en La Pastora”, <http://www.desarrollominero.gob.ve/restauradas-mas-de-180-fachadas-de-viviendas-y-recuperados-11-espacios-publicos-en-la-pastora/>
12. 2016, December 6th, “Pequeña minería aportará al país más de 3.500 millones de dólares por año”, <http://www.desarrollominero.gob.ve/pequena-mineria-aportara-al-pais-mas-de-3-500-millones-de-dolares-por-ano/>

13. 2016, December 20th, "La Pastora renovó su cara con el Plan Caracas Bella y Socialista (Galería)", <http://www.desarrollominero.gob.ve/la-pastora-renovo-su-cara-con-el-plan-caracas-bella-y-socialista-galeria/>
14. 2017, February 7th, "TECMIN cumple 31 años al servicio del desarrollo minero", <http://www.desarrollominero.gob.ve/tecm-in-cumple-31-anos-al-servicio-del-desarrollo-minero/>
15. 2017, February 13th, "Gobierno Bolivariano promueve fortalecimiento del sector minero mediante conjunción de esfuerzos", <http://www.desarrollominero.gob.ve/gobierno-bolivariano-promueve-fortalecimiento-del-sector-minero-mediante-conjuncion-de-esfuerzos/>
16. 2017, February 19th, "Jorge Arreaza nuevo Ministro de Desarrollo Minero Ecológico", <http://www.desarrollominero.gob.ve/jorge-arreaza-nuevo-ministro-de-desarrollo-minero-ecologico/>
17. 2017, February 20th, "Jorge Arreaza asume el reto de impulsar el desarrollo minero ecológico y humanista", <http://www.desarrollominero.gob.ve/jorge-arreaza-asume-el-reto-de-impulsar-el-desarrollo-minero-ecologico-y-humanista/>
18. 2017, February 22nd, "Ministro Arreaza destaca importancia del Motor Minería como fuente de riqueza para la inversión social", <http://www.desarrollominero.gob.ve/ministro-arreaza-destaca-importancia-del-motor-mineria-como-fuente-de-riqueza-para-la-inversion-social/>
19. 2017, February 23rd, "Espacio y tiempo en Revolución", <http://www.desarrollominero.gob.ve/espacio-y-tiempo-en-revolucion/>
20. 2017, February 24th, "Venezuela y Palestina firman memorandos de entendimiento en el área minera", <http://www.desarrollominero.gob.ve/venezuela-y-palestina-firman-memorandos-de-entendimiento-en-el-area-minera/>
21. 2017, March 1st, "Ministro Arreaza llama a la clase trabajadora a acelerar desarrollo del Motor Minería", <http://www.desarrollominero.gob.ve/ministro-arreaza-llama-a-la-clase-trabajadora-a-acelerar-desarrollo-del-motor-mineria/>
22. 2017, March 2nd, "Motor Minería apuntala plan de reactivación de Loma de Níquel", <http://www.desarrollominero.gob.ve/motor-mineria-apuntala-plan-de-reactivacion-de-loma-de-niquel/>
23. 2017, March 2nd, "Motor Minería apuntala plan de reactivación de Loma de Níquel (Galería)", <http://www.desarrollominero.gob.ve/motor-mineria-apuntala-plan-de-reactivacion-de-loma-de-niquel-galeria/>
24. 2017, March 5th, "Ministro Arreaza: El Comandante Chávez siempre será visto como un referente para cambiar el mundo", <http://www.desarrollominero.gob.ve/ministro-arreaza-el-comandante-chavez-siempre-sera-visto-como-un-referente-para-cambiar-el-mundo/>
25. 2017, March 5th, "Ministro Arreaza recibe al presidente de Nicaragua Daniel Ortega (Galería)", <http://www.desarrollominero.gob.ve/ministro-arreaza-recibe-al-presidente-de-nicaragua-daniel-ortega-galeria/>
26. 2017, March 7th, "Ministro Arreaza destacó importancia de alianzas estratégicas para desatar fuerzas productivas de la minería", <http://www.desarrollominero.gob.ve/ministro-arreaza-destaco-importancia-de-alianzas-estrategicas-para-desatar-fuerzas-productivas-de-la-mineria/>
27. 2017, March 9th, "Venezuela intercambió experiencias con empresas internacionales para fortalecer sector minero", <http://www.desarrollominero.gob.ve/venezuela-intercambio-experiencias-con-empresas-internacionales-para-fortalecer-sector-minero/>
28. 2017, March 12th, "Gobierno Bolivariano celebró primer año de los CLAP en Delta Amacuro con un despliegue por varias parroquias (Galería)", <http://www.desarrollominero.gob.ve/gobierno-bolivariano-celebro-primer-ano-de-los-clap-en-delta-amacuro-con-un-despliegue-por-varias-parroquias-galeria/>

29. 2017, March 17th, "Mineros del estado Bolívar participaron en mesas de trabajo para continuar avanzando en el Plan de Regularización", <http://www.desarrollominero.gob.ve/mineros-del-estado-bolivar-participaron-en-mesas-de-trabajo-para-continuar-avanzando-en-el-plan-de-regularizacion/>
30. 2017, March 17th, "En reunión del Consejo Popular de la Minería ministro Arreaza invitó a aunar esfuerzos para acelerar Plan de Organización y Regularización (Galería)", <http://www.desarrollominero.gob.ve/en-reunion-del-consejo-popular-de-la-mineria-ministro-arreaza-invito-a-aunar-esfuerzos-para-acelerar-plan-de-organizacion-y-regularizacion-galeria/>
31. 2017, March 18th, "Gobierno Bolivariano acelerará Plan de Organización y Regularización de la pequeña minería", <http://www.desarrollominero.gob.ve/gobierno-bolivariano-acelerara-plan-de-organizacion-y-regularizacion-de-la-pequena-mineria/>
32. 2017, March 20th, "Gobierno garantiza que actividad minera en el país respete el medio ambiente", <http://www.desarrollominero.gob.ve/gobierno-garantiza-que-actividad-minera-en-el-pais-respete-el-medio-ambiente/>
33. 2017, March 21st, "Venezuela y Sudáfrica buscan establecer alianzas estratégicas en sector minero", <http://www.desarrollominero.gob.ve/venezuela-y-sudafrica-buscan-establecer-alianzas-estrategicas-en-sector-minero/>
34. 2017, March 22nd, "Pequeños mineros participan en reimpulso de la Misión Piar", <http://www.desarrollominero.gob.ve/pequenos-mineros-participan-en-reimpulso-de-la-mision-piar/>
35. 2017, March 25th, "Juramentan a 500 efectivos de la GNB que resguardarán zonas mineras del país", <http://www.desarrollominero.gob.ve/juramentan-a-500-efectivos-de-la-gnb-que-resguardaran-zonas-mineras-del-pais/>
36. 2017, March 26th, "No está planteado ampliar poligonales de intervención de carbón en Zulia", <http://www.desarrollominero.gob.ve/no-esta-planteado-ampliar-poligonales-de-intervencion-de-carbon-en-zulia/>
37. 2017, March 26th, "Arreaza: Venezuela ha comenzado a superar el rentismo petrolero", <http://www.desarrollominero.gob.ve/arreaza-venezuela-ha-comenzado-a-superar-el-rentismo-petrolero/>
38. 2017, March 26th, "Gobierno Bolivariano activará Fondo Social Minero para atención integral a la pequeña minería", <http://www.desarrollominero.gob.ve/gobierno-bolivariano-activara-fondo-social-minero-para-atencion-integral-a-la-pequena-mineria/>
39. 2017, March 29th, "Nuevo modelo de producción de la minería contempla cuatro planes estratégicos", <http://www.desarrollominero.gob.ve/nuevo-modelo-de-produccion-de-la-mineria-contempla-cuatro-planes-estrategicos/>
40. 2017, March 29th, "Relanzamiento de la Misión Piar garantiza beneficios para los pequeños mineros del estado Bolívar", <http://www.desarrollominero.gob.ve/relanzamiento-de-la-mision-piar-garantiza-beneficios-para-los-pequenos-mineros-del-estado-bolivar/>
41. 2017, March 30th, "Gobierno organiza sector minero para garantizar una minería ecológica", <http://www.desarrollominero.gob.ve/gobierno-organiza-sector-minero-para-garantizar-una-mineria-ecologica/>
42. 2017, March 30th, "Ejecutivo Nacional aprueba recursos para activación plena de Carbozulia", <http://www.desarrollominero.gob.ve/ejecutivo-nacional-aprueba-recursos-para-activacion-plena-de-carbozulia/>

Appendix C: News articles about foreign involvement in mining

Here is a list of the other new articles retrieved from the official web page of the mining ministry of Venezuela. The news articles were retrieved from the “*news archive*” – section of the web page and contains news stories, in chronological order, that were selected to represent news stories with foreign involvement in the Venezuelan mining ventures as the main theme. They are a collection of articles dating from April 26th, 2017 to November 24th, 2017.

Link of the archive: <http://www.desarrollominero.gob.ve/archivo-de-noticias/>

All links were accessed on May 11th, 2020.

1. 2017, April 26th, “Venezuela y Sudáfrica se enfilan en la creación de empresa mixta para desarrollo de actividad diamantífera del país”, <http://www.desarrollominero.gob.ve/venezuela-y-sudafrica-se-enfilan-en-la-creacion-de-empresa-mixta-para-desarrollo-de-actividad-diamantifera-del-pais/>
2. 2017 April 28th, “Venezuela y Angola fortalecen alianzas para el impulso del sector diamantífero nacional”, <http://www.desarrollominero.gob.ve/venezuela-y-angola-fortalecen-alianzas-para-el-impulso-del-sector-diamantifero-nacional/>
3. 2017, May 12th, “Venezuela y Chile profundizan intercambio para consolidación de la industria minera”, <http://www.desarrollominero.gob.ve/venezuela-y-chile-profundizan-intercambio-para-consolidacion-de-la-industria-minera/>
4. 2017, May 17th, “Venezuela dice presente en Latin America Down Under 2017”, <http://www.desarrollominero.gob.ve/venezuela-dice-presente-en-latin-america-down-under-2017/>
5. 2017, May 22nd, “Gobierno Nacional trabaja junto a la pequeña y gran minería en zonas donde coinciden”, <http://www.desarrollominero.gob.ve/gobierno-nacional-trabaja-junto-a-la-pequena-y-gran-mineria-en-zonas-e2%80%8b-donde-coinciden/>
6. 2017, June 3rd, “Firmada declaración conjunta de cooperación en materia minera entre Venezuela y Suráfrica”, <http://www.desarrollominero.gob.ve/firmada-declaracion-conjunta-de-cooperacion-en-materia-minera-entre-venezuela-y-surafrica/>
7. 2017, June 30th, “Venezuela fortalece alianza con Bolivia para el impulso de la minería nacional”, <http://www.desarrollominero.gob.ve/venezuela-fortalece-alianza-con-bolivia-para-el-impulso-de-la-mineria-nacional/>
8. 2017, July 20th, “Venezuela y Angola firman memorando para creación de empresa mixta diamantífera en el Arco Minero del Orinoco”, <http://www.desarrollominero.gob.ve/venezuela-y-angola-firman-memorando-para-creacion-de-empresa-mixta-diamantifera-en-el-arco-minero-del-orinoco/>
9. 2017, July 21st, “Ejecutivo Nacional firma alianzas estratégicas para fortalecer el Motor Minería”, <http://www.desarrollominero.gob.ve/ejecutivo-nacional-firma-alianzas-estrategicas-para-fortalecer-el-motor-mineria/>
10. 2017, July, 28th, “Alianzas estratégicas con empresas mineras internacionales generaran riquezas para inversión social”, <http://www.desarrollominero.gob.ve/alianzas-estrategicas-con-empresas-mineras-internacionales-generaran-riquezas-para-inversion-social/>
11. 2017, August 14th, “Pueblo minero se moviliza en defensa de la soberanía”, <http://www.desarrollominero.gob.ve/pueblo-minero-se-moviliza-en-defensa-de-la-soberania/>

12. 2017, August 14th, “Pequeñas y pequeños mineros rechazan injerencia del gobierno de Donald Trump”, <http://www.desarrollominero.gob.ve/pequenas-y-pequenos-mineros-rechazan-injerencia-del-gobierno-de-donald-trump/>
13. 2017, August 14th, “Buque con más de 47 mil toneladas de carbón venezolano zarpa hacia Europa”, <http://www.desarrollominero.gob.ve/buque-con-mas-de-47-mil-toneladas-de-carbon-venezolano-zarpa-hacia-europa/>
14. 2017, September 9th, “Ministro Cano: Leyes constituyentes incentivarán y protegerán inversiones en el Arco Minero”, <http://www.desarrollominero.gob.ve/ministro-cano-leyes-constituyentes-incentivaran-y-protegeran-inversiones-en-el-arco-minero/>
15. 2017, October 4th, “Venezuela estableció con Rusia líneas de investigación e inversión mineras”, <http://www.desarrollominero.gob.ve/venezuela-establecio-con-rusia-lineas-de-investigacion-e-inversion-mineras/>
16. 2017, October 5th, “Venezuela se luce con potencial minero en Turquía”, <http://www.desarrollominero.gob.ve/venezuela-se-luce-con-potencial-minero-en-turquia/>
17. 2017, October, 16th, “Empresas palestinas y autoridades mineras revisaron acuerdos para explotación de coltán”, <http://www.desarrollominero.gob.ve/empresas-palestinas-y-autoridades-mineras-revisaron-acuerdos-para-explotacion-de-coltan/>
18. 2017, November 22nd, “Instalan mesa de trabajo de la Comisión de Alto Nivel Rusia-Venezuela para acuerdos económicos”, <http://www.desarrollominero.gob.ve/instalan-mesa-de-trabajo-de-la-comision-de-alto-nivel-rusia-venezuela-para-acuerdos-economicos/>
19. 2017, November 24th, “Venezuela y Rusia coordinan alianza científico-técnica por una minería responsable en el país”, <http://www.desarrollominero.gob.ve/venezuela-y-rusia-coordinan-alianza-cientifico-tecnica-por-una-mineria-responsable-en-el-pais/>
20. 2017, November 24th, “Científicos rusos apoyarán a Venezuela para avanzar a una minería responsable”, <http://www.desarrollominero.gob.ve/cientificos-rusos-apoyaran-a-venezuela-para-avanzar-a-una-mineria-responsable/>

Appendix D: Development plans

Here are listed the two national development plans of Venezuela. I accessed both of them through the Regional Observatory on Planning for Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, which among its other functions, presents development plans of the countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The two plans are listed below. Note that the development plan of 2013-2019 presents no publication information (date, place...).

“Plan de la Patria: Segundo Plan Socialista de Desarrollo Económico y Social de la Nación, 2013-2019”

Retrieved from: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Regional Observatory on Planning for Development in Latin America and the Caribbean [online]

<https://observatorioplanificacion.cepal.org/es/planes/plan-de-la-patria-2013-2019-de-venezuela>

“Plan de la Patria. Tercer Plan Socialista de Desarrollo Económico y Social de la Nación, 2019-2025”, published April 8th, 2019, Caracas.

Retrieved from: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Regional Observatory on Planning for Development in Latin America and the Caribbean [online]

<https://observatorioplanificacion.cepal.org/es/planes/plan-de-la-patria-2019-2025-de-venezuela>